THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE! SOMEHOW HERE WE ARE AT THE THIRD VOLUME ALREADY. THANK YOU VERY MUCH! THIS TIME, WE TAKE A LITTLE BREAK FROM OUR USUAL TRAVEL FOR A HOMECOMING. I HOPE YOU ENJOY!

—TAGAWA MI

田川ミ

3

ちちこぐさ

【父子草】

BLADE COMICS

ちちこぐさ

【父子草】

3

田川ミ

MAG Garden

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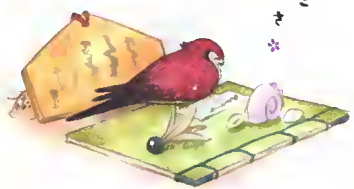
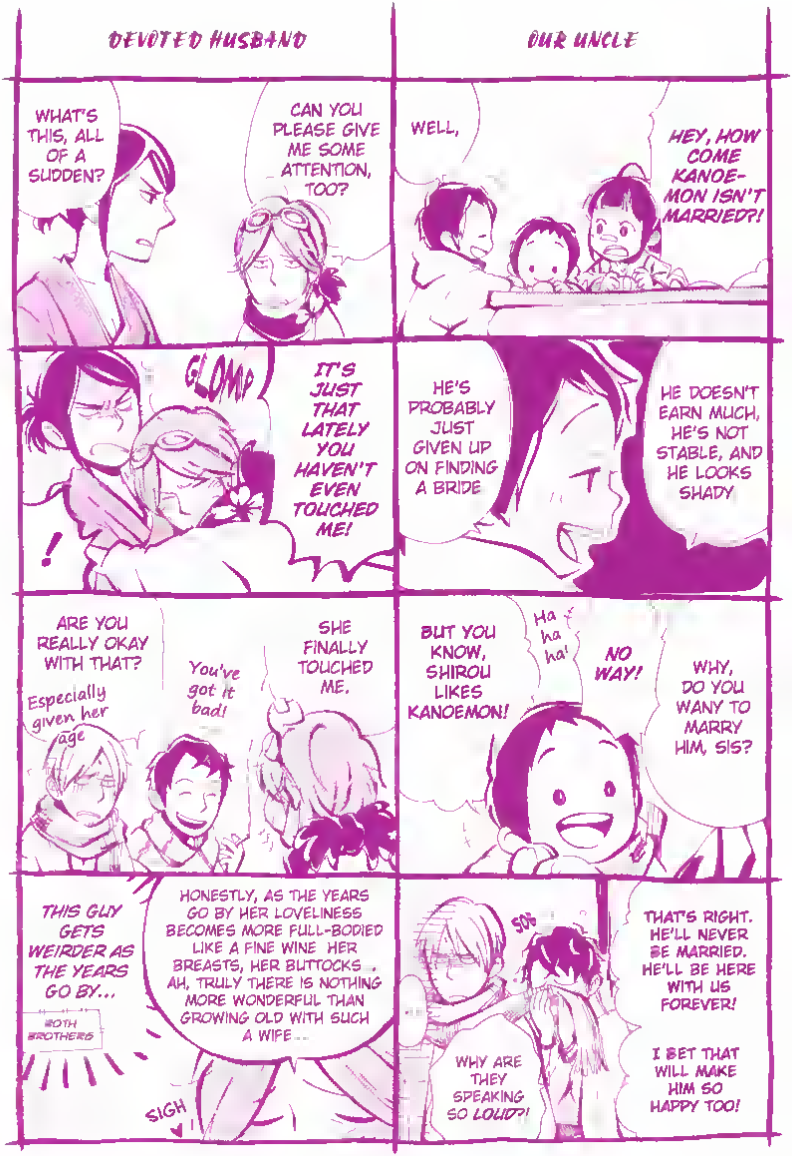
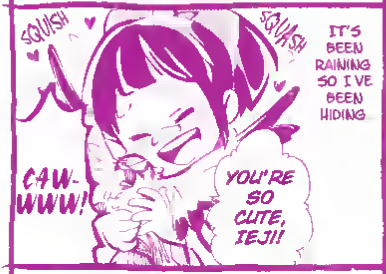
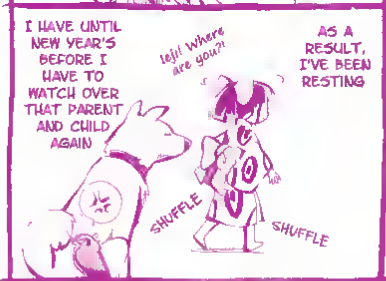


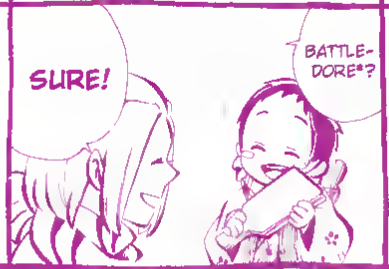

DEVOTED HUSBAND
OUR UNCLE
WHAT'S THIS, ALL OF A SUDDEN?
CAN YOU PLEASE GIVE ME SOME ATTENTION, TOO?
WELL,
HEY, HOW COME KANOE-MON ISN'T MARRIED?!
GLOMP
!
IT'S JUST THAT LATELY YOU HAVEN'T EVEN TOUCHED ME!
HE'S PROBABLY JUST GIVEN UP ON FINDING A BRIDE
HE DOESN'T EARN MUCH, HE'S NOT STABLE, AND HE LOOKS SHADY
ARE YOU REALLY OKAY WITH THAT?
Especially given her age
You've got it bad!
SHE FINALLY TOUCHED ME.
BUT YOU KNOW, SHIROU LIKES KANOEMON!
Ha ha ha!
NO WAY!
WHY, DO YOU WANY TO MARRY HIM, SIS?
THIS GUY GETS WEIRDER AS THE YEARS GO BY...
#OTH BROTHERS
HONESTLY, AS THE YEARS GO BY HER LOVELINESS BECOMES MORE FULL-BODIED LIKE A FINE WINE. HER BREASTS, HER BUTTOCKS . AH, TRULY THERE IS NOTHING MORE WONDERFUL THAN GROWING OLD WITH SUCH A WIFE...
SIGH ♥
SO?
WHY ARE THEY SPEAKING SO LOUD?!
THAT'S RIGHT. HE'LL NEVER BE MARRIED. HE'LL BE HERE WITH US FOREVER!
I BET THAT WILL MAKE HIM SO HAPPY TOO!

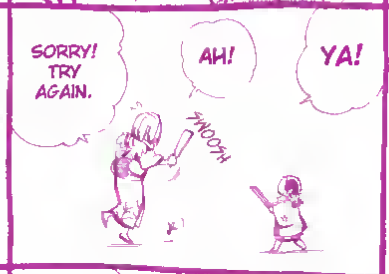
DAY OFF

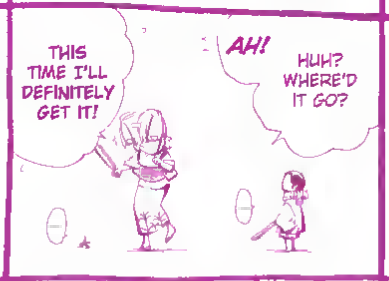


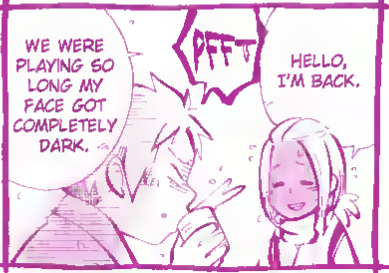

I HAVE UNTIL NEW YEAR'S BEFORE I HAVE TO WATCH OVER THAT PARENT AND CHILD AGAIN
Iejii! Where are you?!
AS A RESULT, I'VE BEEN RESTING
SHUFFLE
SHUFFLE

REALLY BAD AT IT









* battledore was an early form of badminton

Chichikogusa

Chapter 13

BY TAGAWA MI

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【スチル集】

CHAPTER 13 AUNT AND NEPHEW
CHAPTER 14 HOMECOMING AND TRACES OF HIS WIFE
CHAPTER 15 SHIORI AND KAYA.
CHAPTER 16 SHIORI'S WISH
CHAPTER 17 SHIROU AND THE BROTHER AND SISTER
CHAPTER 18 THE FATHER AND CHILD'S NEW JOURNEYS

SOMEHOW,
THE INSTANT
SHIROU WAS
BORN,

I KNEW.

AFTER ALL, HE
CAME FROM
SHIORI AND ME.

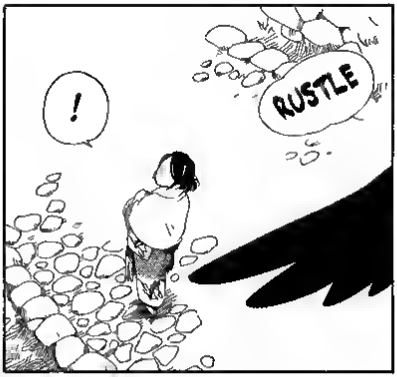
CHICHIKOGUSA
[FATHER AND CHILD GRASS]

AUTHOR: TAGAWA NI

AH HH HH H!
STOP SNIVELING SO MUCH! YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE PARENTS! THINK HOW HARD THIS IS FOR THE BABY!
KILL ME!
KILL ME NOOOOW!
AAAAH! IT HURTS SO MUCH I'LL DIEEE!
WHIMPER
WHIMPER
REALLY, THANK YOU SO SO MUCH!
ZZZZ
ZZZZ
!
...
WAAH!
WAAAH!
GASP
I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING.
ALL OF US OWE SO MUCH TO YOU, MISS TATSUMI!

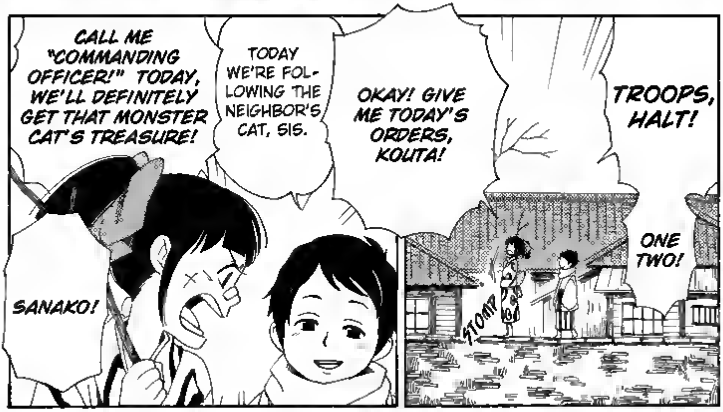
THE CHILD IS THE ONE WHO DID ALL THE WORK.
IT'S SUCH A DIFFICULT TIME,
SO PLEASE PROTECT THE CHILD IN THE FUTURE, NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS.
DONE WITH YOUR WORK?
OH, TATSUMI

THAT'S A MARVELOUS NEW YEAR'S PINE.
WELL, IT'LL BE NEW YEAR'S EVE SOON, AFTER ALL.
IT WILL.
I HOPE YOU HAVE A GOOD ONE.
AH!
MRS TATSUMI, HELLO!
HELLO!
HELLO THERE.
MAKE SURE YOU DON'T FALL DOWN.
SIGH
THE END OF THE YEAR, WITH ALL THIS GOING ON.



AND I STILL HAVEN'T SEEN THAT BROTHER OF MINE, WHO SAID HE WOULD BE HERE IN DECEMBER.

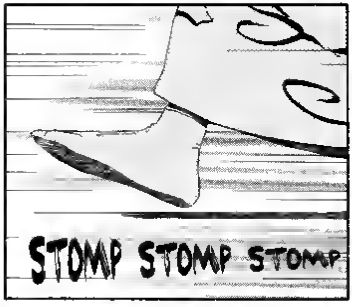
ONE!
TWO!
ONE!
TWO!


CALL ME "COMMANDING OFFICER!" TODAY, WE'LL DEFINITELY GET THAT MONSTER CAT'S TREASURE!
TODAY WE'RE FOLLOWING THE NEIGHBOR'S CAT, SIS.
OKAY! GIVE ME TODAY'S ORDERS, KOUTA!
TROOPS, HALT!
SANAKO!
ONE TWO!
STOMP

I SEE.
WE JUST SCOUTED OUT THE HOUSE A SECOND AGO!
UNCLE TORA STILL ISN'T HERE YET.
WELCOME BACK.
DON'T SHOUT SO MUCH! IT'LL BOTHER THE NEIGHBORS.
AH! GENERAL MOM, THANKS AS ALWAYS FOR YOUR HARD WORK!
STOMP

...

EVEN THOUGH I DIDN'T ASK THEM TO...
NOW WE'RE GOING TO GO SCOUT OUT MI'S PLACE.
IF UNCLE APPEARS, WE'LL CAPTURE HIM FOR SURE!
KITTLE


STOMP STOMP STOMP

AH.

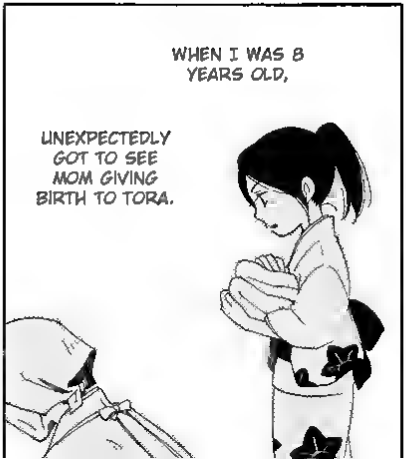
SHOVE

IT'S BEEN A WHILE, SIS.
YOUR CUTE LITTLE KANOE HAS RETURNED AGAIN.
HUH?
HAVE YOU GROWN SOME MORE WHITE HAIRS LATELY?
TWITCH
THROB
THROB
WHAT?
IS IT THAT TIME OF THE MONTH OR SOMETHING?
SIGH...
STEP
STEP
AND RIGHT NOW, SINCE THE YOUNGEST HASN'T COME BACK SHE'S REALLY UPSET AND HAS NO PATIENCE.
UNFORTUNATELY, IT'S A LOT OF TROUBLE HAVING TWO YOUNGER BROTHERS.
Have some sympathy

HA! I GUESS TORA REALLY WON'T BE COMING, HUH?
SWOOSH
WHAT?
NO WAY. I'LL BE THE ONE WINNING.
The bet's not over yet
WITH THAT KID OF HIS?
I BET HE'S WAITING 'TIL THE LAST POSSIBLE MINUTE TO TELL SIS "NO."
Come on, pay up
YOU CAN'T KNOW FOR SURE.
ACHOO
HE MAY BE A COWARD, BUT THAT KIND OF BEHAVIOR ISN'T LIKE HIM.
EVEN *THAT TIME*, AFTER I ROUSED HIM HE WENT OFF AND TOOK SHIROU WITH HIM, RIGHT?
ACHOO
HE MIGHT COME THROUGH AGAIN.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN "ROUSED HIM," SOUMA?
First I've heard of it.

WELL,
SHE BASICALLY HAS TO BE THEIR MOTHER, AFTER ALL.
ISN'T IT NATURAL SHE'D WORRY ABOUT THEM?
IT'S HARD FOR ME TO WATCH TATSUMI SUFFER OVER WORRYING ABOUT THEM ALL THE TIME.
I WAS THE ONE WHO TOLD HIM TO HURRY UP AND COME HOME, AFTER ALL.
YOU SERIOUS?
PFBBBTT
SO WORRIED ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE...
SLIP
YOU TWO REALLY ARE WELL-SUITED FOR EACH OTHER.
LATELY SHE'S EVEN BEEN GETTING COLD TO ME, HER OWN HUSBAND.
IT'S TERRIBLE.
DON'T SAY IT'S BECAUSE I STINK, OR I'LL...
PBBBTT

FLAP FLAP
OCTOBER SIXTH, 1:46 AM. A BOY WAS BORN. THE MOTHER IS SHIORI, AND TORAKICHI IS THE FATHER.


WHEN I WAS 8 YEARS OLD,
UNEXPECTEDLY GOT TO SEE MOM GIVING BIRTH TO TORA.

THE CHILD'S NAME IS SHIROU...
I—

WAAH
IT WAS ONLY WHEN THEY GENTLY PATTED HIS BACK THAT HE FOUND HIS VOICE.
MY NEW BROTHER WAS UNABLE TO CRY AT FIRST.
NOW, TWENTY YEARS LATER, IT'S HIS CHILD THAT I'M DELIVERING.
SHIORI, HE'S OUT!
PANT PANT
HE ALWAYS SEEMED VERY FORLORN.
Your hands are dirty
Let me see! Let me see!
SNATCH

I CAN'T HEAR HIM...
TATSUMI,
WHY ISN'T HE CRYING...?
HEY...
WAAH
...
WHACK
?!
WHACK
WHACK
WHACK
HE'S CRYING!
WAAAH!
WAAAH!

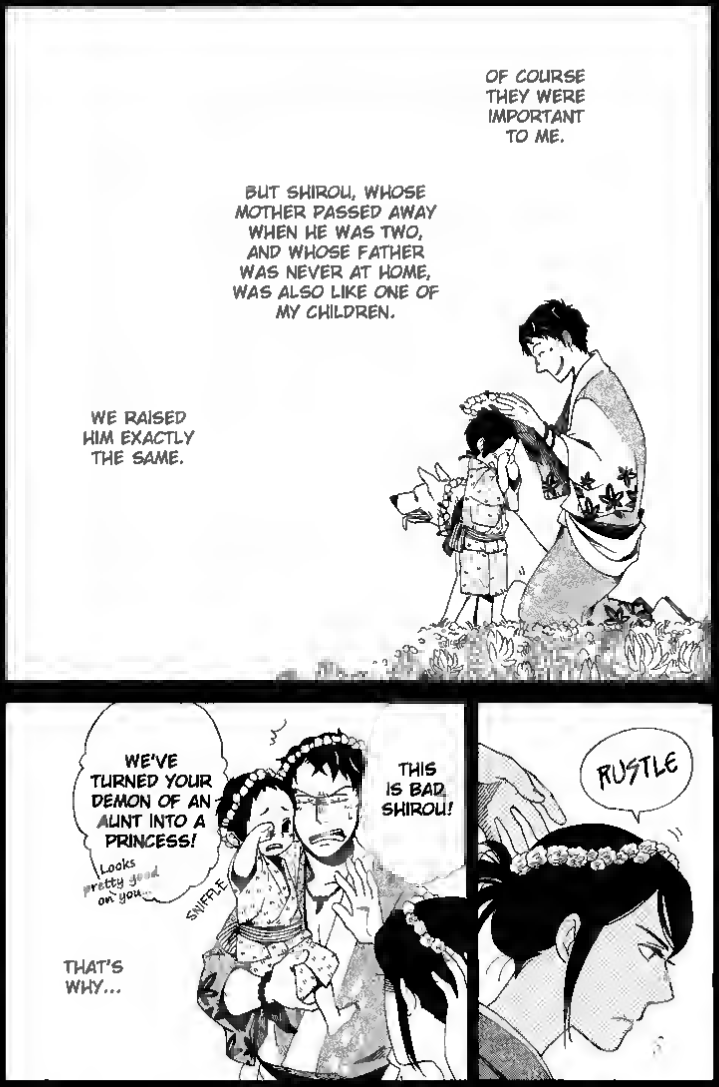
IT WAS EXACTLY THE SAME AS WHEN HIS FATHER HAD BEEN BORN.
SHAVER
WAHH
SHIROU...
AND JUST LIKE THAT TIME, IT WAS NECESSARY FOR ME TO KEEP HIM IN MY HANDS.

TORA...
LET'S SAY GOODBYE TO YOUR MOTHER.
IT'LL BE OKAY.
YOUR AUNTIE WILL CARRY YOU...
...
YOU DON'T NEED TO WORRY.
ABOUT SHIROU.
WHEN YOU GO OUT TO WORK, YOU CAN LEAVE HIM HERE, OKAY?

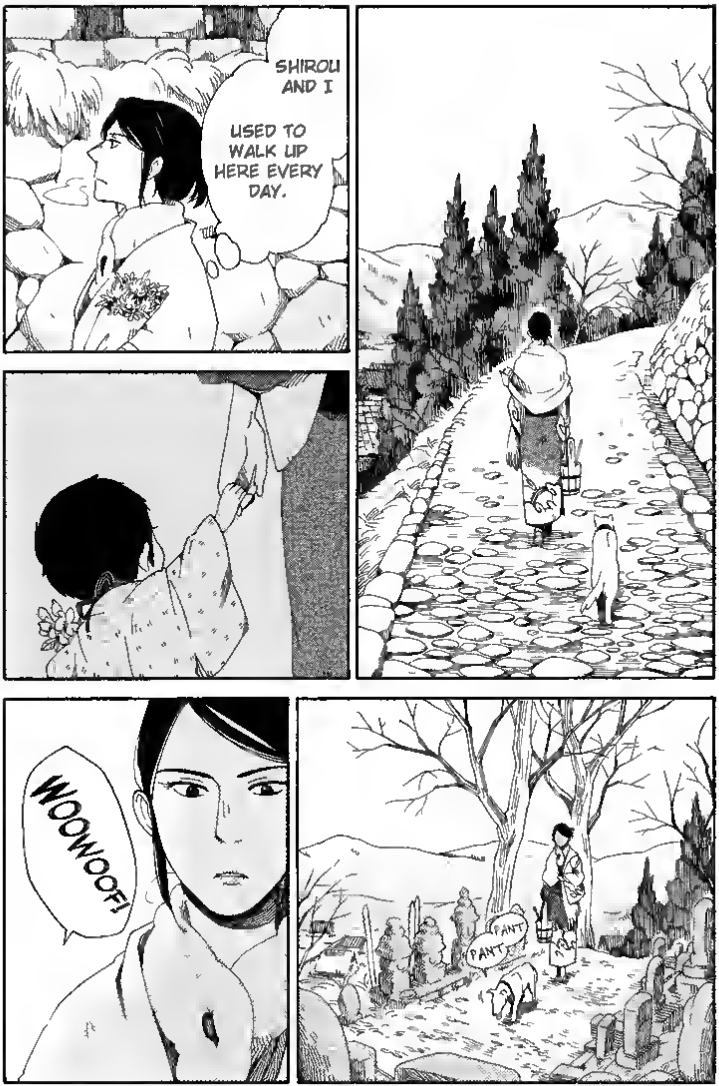
YEAH...
DO YOU HEAR ME?
I THOUGHT I'D MADE A MISTAKE.
I HADN'T INTENDED TO LET HIM GO.
EEK! MAMA'S COMING!
HEY!
DASH
NOO-OOO-OOO!
I CAUGHT YOU!
WAIT SHIROU!
WHAM
THWACK

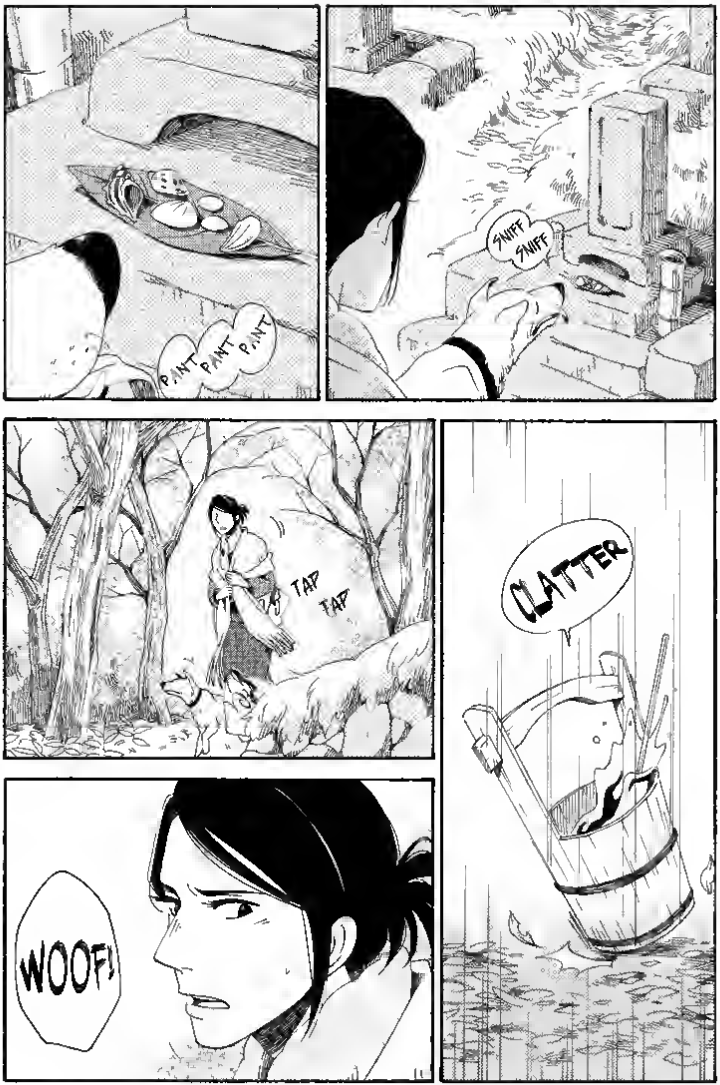
UHHH...
SNIFF
SHIROU!
YOU DON'T NEED TO CRY THAT MUCH ABOUT IT!
WAAH!
HIC!
MOM, SHIROU HASN'T EATEN ANYTHING AT ALL.
IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANY APPETITE AT ALL, THINGS WILL BE BAD.
...
BE A GOOD BOY AND EAT, OKAY?
HERE.
SHAKE
...

SIGH
HE'S ALREADY TWO, ISN'T HE?
HE HASN'T SAID A SINGLE WORD. DON'T YOU THINK IT'S STRANGE?
AND HE GETS SICK SO EASILY IT MUST BE VERY HARD.
FWOO
TATSUMI.
TATSUMI.
AS FOR MY OWN CHILDREN,
THAT'S THE SECOND TIME THIS MONTH HE'S HAD A FEVER...
IS SHIROU SICK AGAIN?
IT'S RARE TO SEE YOU FALLING ASLEEP LIKE THIS

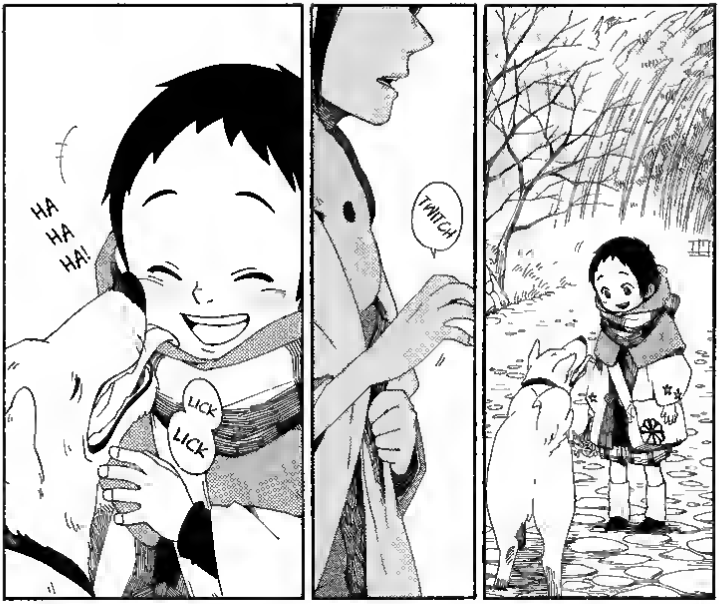

OF COURSE THEY WERE IMPORTANT TO ME.
BUT SHIROU, WHOSE MOTHER PASSED AWAY WHEN HE WAS TWO, AND WHOSE FATHER WAS NEVER AT HOME, WAS ALSO LIKE ONE OF MY CHILDREN.
WE RAISED HIM EXACTLY THE SAME.
WE'VE TURNED YOUR DEMON OF AN AUNT INTO A PRINCESS!
Looks pretty good on you...
SNIFFLE
THIS IS BAD, SHIROU!
THAT'S WHY...
RUSTLE

POOF
SHIROU'S DEVELOPMENT BOOK
...
I CAN'T HELP BUT WISH FOR HIM TO BE HAPPY.
HEE HEE
SHIROU,
ARE YOU MAKING SURE NOT TO CRY...?
SHIROU'S DEVELOPMENT BOOK (3)


SHIROU AND I USED TO WALK UP HERE EVERY DAY.
WOOWOOF!
PANT
PANT


PANT
PANT
PANT
SNIFF
SNIFF
TAP
TAP
CLATTER
WOOF!

WOOWOOF!
WOOF!
PANT
PANT


HA
HA
HA!
LICK
LICK
TWITCH

AUNTY?

WE'RE HOME!

FLUTTER
?!
CAW
IEJI...
SHIROU!
CLOP
CAW
CAW
CAW

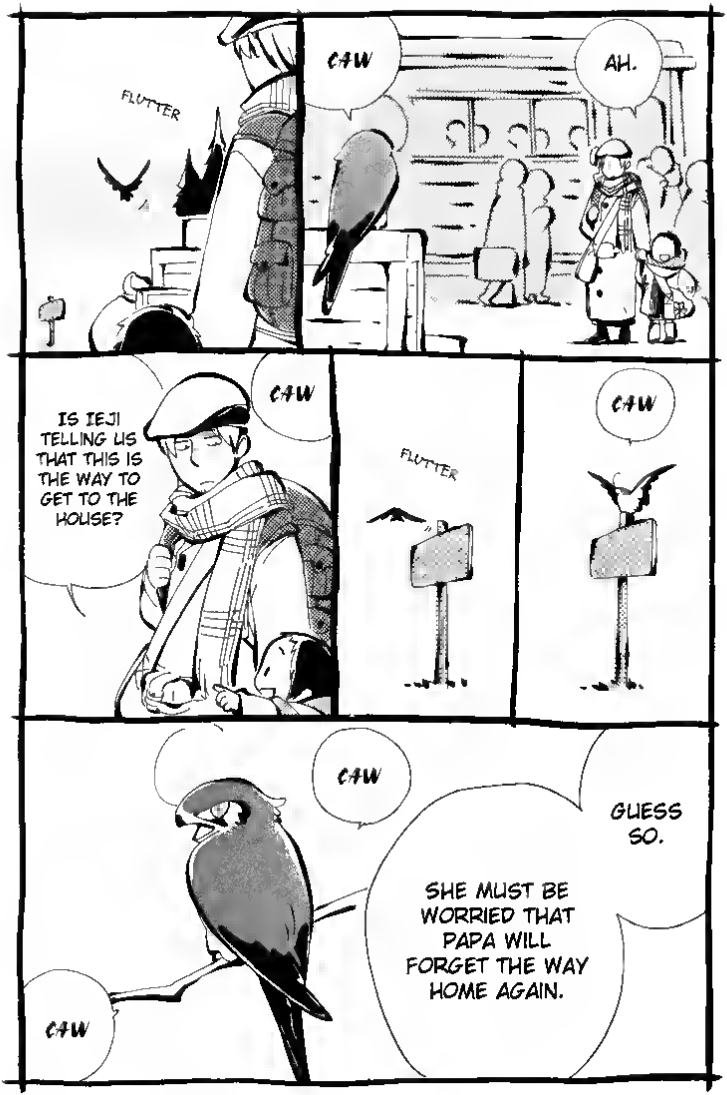
HAVE YOU BEEN WELL?
HEE HEE
YEAH!

SIGH
HONESTLY...
SCRAPE
I WAS SO...
WORRIED!
OW!
THWACK
...
TORA?
EVEN AFTER SUCH A LONG ABSENCE, YOU'RE NOT EVEN GOING TO GREET YOUR OWN SISTER,
SHIVER

FIRST OF ALL... WELCOME.
CRACK
THERE'S A MOUNTAIN-LOAD OF THINGS I WANT TO SAY TO YOU AND ASK YOU.
LOOM
I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS.
?!
I'M HOME, BIG SIS...
Y, YES.

COMING HOME

I WAS SOMEHOW ABLE TO RETURN TO MY HOME VILLAGE
IN A QUIET PERIOD AT THE END OF SOME WORK,
I BET SHE'LL BE PRETTY ANGRY
I'M NOT QUITE SURE HOW SHE'LL LOOK WHEN WE MEET
AND THAT'S NOT THE ONLY SCARY THING



EXTRA STORY ELEVEN - END

Chichikogusa

Chapter 14

BY TAGAWA MI

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JUST LET ME RAISE SHIROU!
I'LL JUST TELL HIM YOU DIED. THEN YOU WON'T NEED TO SHOW HIM YOUR FACE EVER AGAIN!
IT'S BEEN TWO YEARS NOW SINCE YOU LEFT YOUR SON. WHY ARE YOU SNIVELING BACK NOW...?!
TORAKICHI...

TATSUMI WAS CALLED OUT AS A MIDWIFE.
SHE'LL BE GONE FOR QUITE A WHILE.
WHY DON'T YOU LEAVE NOW AND TAKE YOUR SON WITH YOU?

YOUR SISTER ISN'T JOKING.
IF YOU MAKE THE WRONG CHOICE NOW, YOU WON'T GET A SECOND CHANCE TO APOLOGIZE.

HE'S BEEN TALKING ABOUT IT NON-STOP.
HE'S PRETTY EXCITED, BUT...

AH!
IT'S HERE!
...

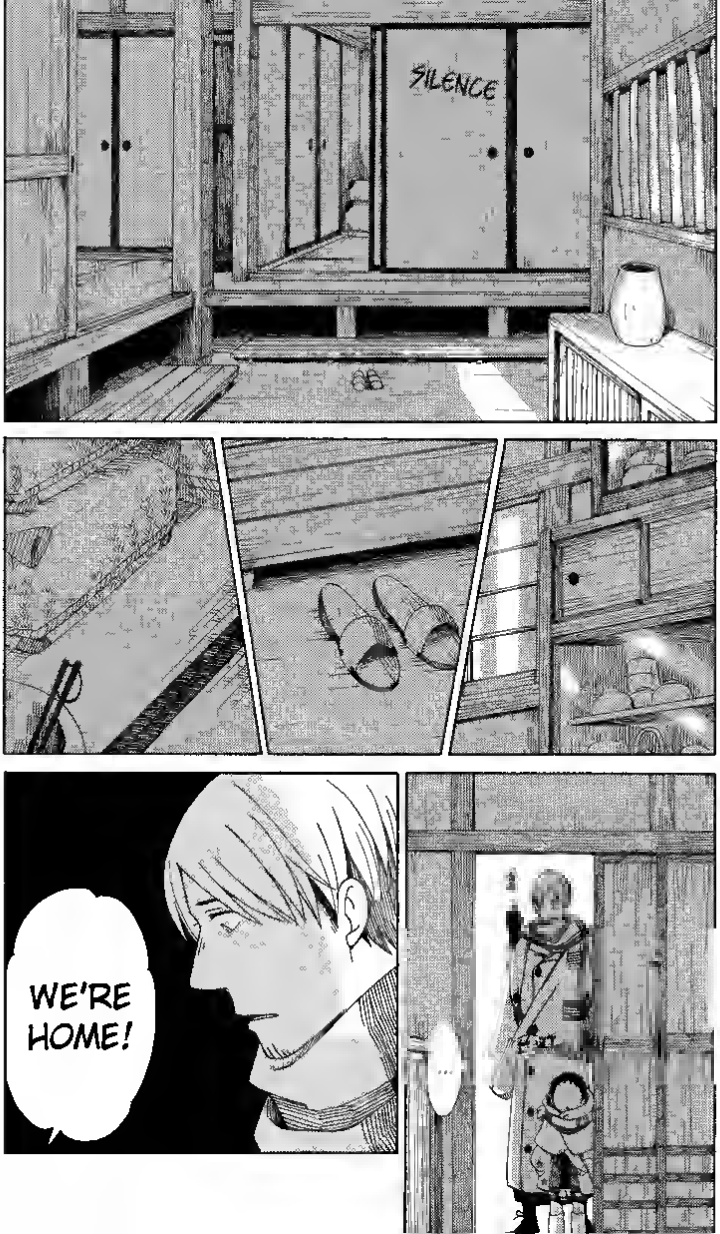
PAPA!
WE SHOULD BE OKAY... RIGHT?
YEAH.
RUSTLE
HURRY, COME AND SEE!
GRIN

CHICHIKOGUSA
[FATHER AND CHILD GRASS]

AUTHOR: TAGAWA KI

CHAPTER 14: HOMECOMING AND TRACES OF HIS WIFE

HEY, HEY! AREN'T YOU GONNA OPEN IT?
...
YAY! HERE'S SHIROU'S HOUSE!
COW
...
TAP TAP
PAPA, HURRY!
HURRY, OPEN IT! COME ON!
CLENCH
AH.
HA!
SFX: RATTLE


SILENCE
WE'RE HOME!
...

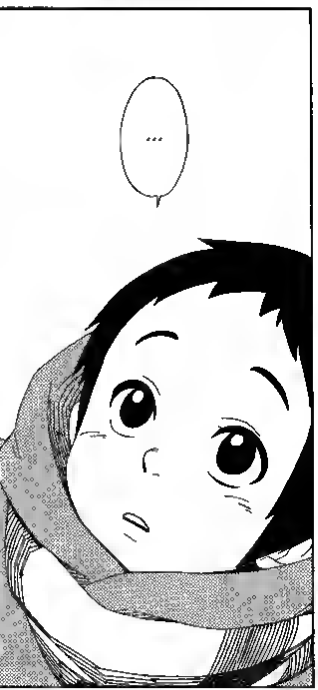
WE'RE HOME.
WELCOME HOME!
PAPA, YOU SAY IT TOO!
GRIN
...
FIDGET
FIDGET
CHW
RATTLE

LAST TIME, I DIDN'T SET FOOT IN HERE AT ALL.
IT'S BEEN THREE YEARS.
IT'S PRETTY CLEAN...
!
CLICK
AH.
SLIDE
I WONDER IF BIG SIS HAS BEEN COMING HERE AND CLEANING IT UP.

Note: Daikon is a type of radish. When boiled, it's often served hot and with miso

UM, SHIROU GOT LOTS OF SHELLS TO GIVE TO MAMA.

YEAH, LET'S GO!
WE HAVE TO VISIT MOM'S GRAVE, TOO.
UH... SHALL WE GO TAKE A WALK AROUND THE AREA?


...

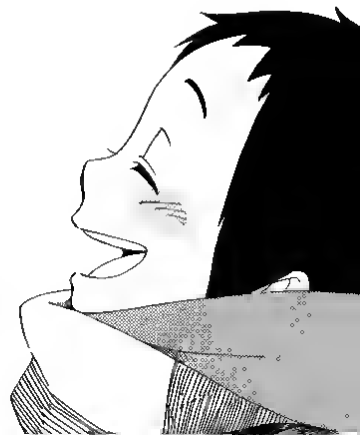
DO YOU THINK MAMA WILL BE HAPPY?
THERE ARE LOTS OF PRETTY ONES. RIGHT?!

AND THERE ARE TONS MORE AT HOME!
AFTER-WARDS, LET'S GO PLAY TO-GETHER!
?
HERE.
SHIROU'S TOYS!
POOF

WHAT'S WRONG ...?
?
FIDGET
FIDGET
STOP

?!
BUT THEN,

SHIROU'S STILL HERE!

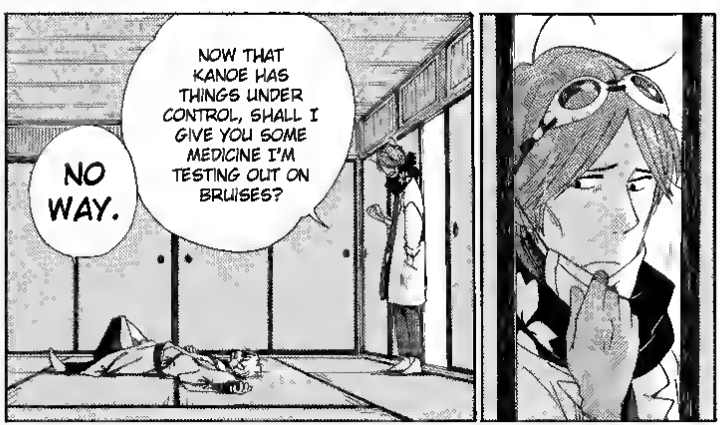


TORA?
...
TO GET CAUGHT IN A PLACE LIKE THIS...
YOU'RE RE-SIGNED TO YOUR FATE, AREN'T YOU?
NOW THEN...
CRACKLE
EVEN THOUGH I TRIED TO PATCH THINGS UP,
I GOT CAUGHT BY THAT BLUNT WEAPON.
URK
WHACK
COME GIVE KANOEMON A BIG OL' HUG!
RUB RUB
YOU GOT BIGGER AGAIN, YOU LITTLE SCAMP!
SHIROU!
SQUEEZE
Eeee!
SHIROU!
Ah!

SANA AND KANOEMON WERE DEFEATED BECAUSE OF YOU!
SANA'S NOT GONNA FORGIVE YOU FOR ABANDONING HER ARMY!
SQUEEZE
!

THWUMP
WELCOME.
WELCOME BACK!
FLINCH
WHACK

...
SLIDE
CLATTER
CALM DOWN, SISTER.
I'LL TAKE YOUR CLOTHES OFF FOR YOU SHIROU, OKAY!
CLATTER
CLATTER
OKAAAY! SHALL WE ALL GET IN THE BATH TOGETHER? IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME!

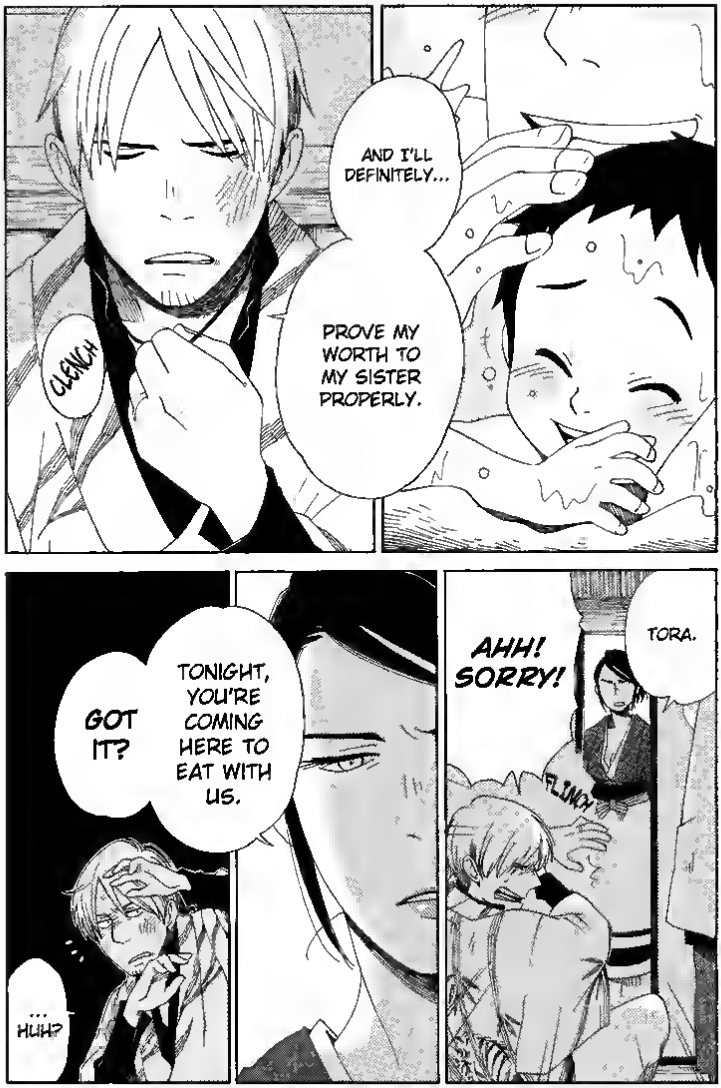

NOW THAT KANOE HAS THINGS UNDER CONTROL, SHALL I GIVE YOU SOME MEDICINE I'M TESTING OUT ON BRUISES?
NO WAY.

KAPPA'S WONDER ELIXIR
PASSED DOWN BY THE KAPPA* FOR GENERATIONS, A MEDICINE INCREDIBLY EFFECTIVE FOR HEALING SPRAINS AND BRUISES (SUPPOSEDLY)
YOU'RE BEING WAY TOO SUSPICIOUS ABOUT IT!
You're even wearing gloves!
Kyaaaaaa
STUMBLE
STUMBLE
THIS MIGHT SAVE COUNTLESS PEOPLE'S LIVES. EVEN A KAPPA WOULD BE THANKFUL FOR IT.
AND I'M PRETTY SURE I'VE WORKED OUT THE KINKS IN IT THIS TIME. I'VE BEEN STUDYING HARD.
SCREW OFF!
YOU KNOW...
OTHER THAN MY SISTER,
I ALSO HAVE THIS BROTHER-IN-LAW WHO'S VERY CONTROLLING.
TELLING ME I OUGHT TO TAKE SHIROU WITH ME WHEN I GO BACK TO WORK, AND THINGS LIKE THAT...
DOES FEAR OF TATSUMI'S ANGER WEIGH DOWN ON YOU THAT MUCH?
YOU SEEM LIKE YOU'RE ABOUT TO COLLAPSE FROM EXHAUSTION.
...

Note: Kappa are legendary creatures supposed to live in rivers around Japan. They eat cucumbers and "shirikodama," small balls containing the soul, which are extracted from people's butts

I'M GRATEFUL.
...
ACHOO!
HMM.
IS SOMETHING WRONG?
IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR THAT BROTHER-IN-LAW,
I'M SURE I'D STILL BE WANDERING AROUND LOST, ALL BY MYSELF...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

I'M SURE I WOULD FEEL THE SAME WAY NOW, IF I HAD.
AT THE TIME, I WOULD HAVE SEEN PASSING SHIROU OFF TO TATSUMI AS JUST GETTING RID OF SOMEBODY BOTHERSOME.
I'LL BE FINE...
Eee!
ALTHOUGH IF YOU BECOME MORE FATHER-AND-SON LIKE, SO THAT MY WIFE DOESN'T HAVE TO WORRY, THAT WOULD BE EVEN BETTER.
JUST SAYING THAT SHOWS HOW MUCH YOU'VE GROWN, DOESN'T IT?
...

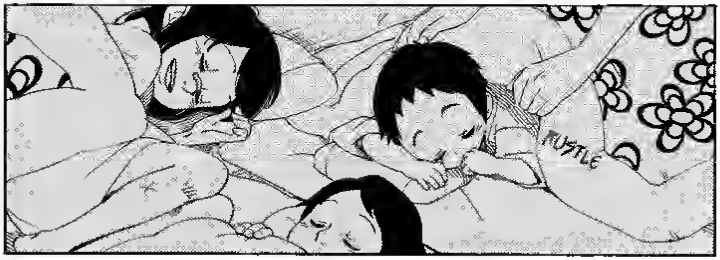

AND I'LL DEFINITELY...
PROVE MY WORTH TO MY SISTER PROPERLY.
CLENCH
TORA.
AHH! SORRY!
FLINCH
TONIGHT, YOU'RE COMING HERE TO EAT WITH US.
GOT IT?
... HUH?

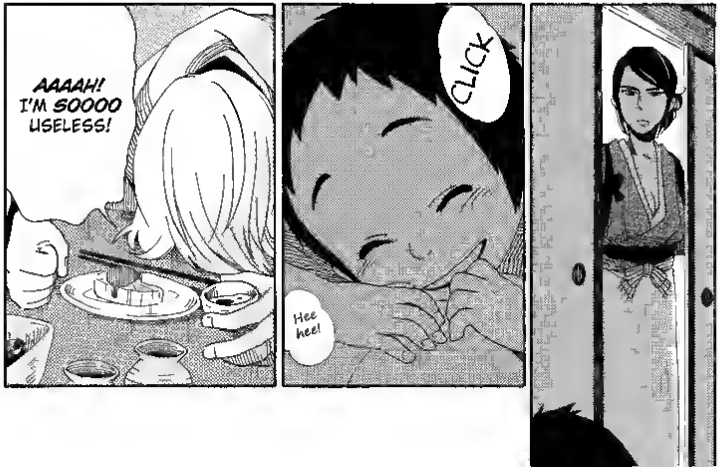
WOW, SO MUCH FOOD!
PAPA, THERE'S INARI!
SIS, I SOMEHOW DON'T HAVE CHOP-STICKS!
TORAKICHI HAS MORE FOOD THAN ME...

KANOEMON, GIVE SOME OF THAT TO SANA!
...
DO YOU WANT TO SAY "AAAAH"?
NO WAAAY!
Ha ha ha!
HERE.
PAPA, YOU LIKE DAIKON, RIGHT? HAVE SOME!
I'M NOT I'M JUST LINING THEM UP.
KOUTA! WHY ARE YOU AVOIDING YOUR CARROTS?

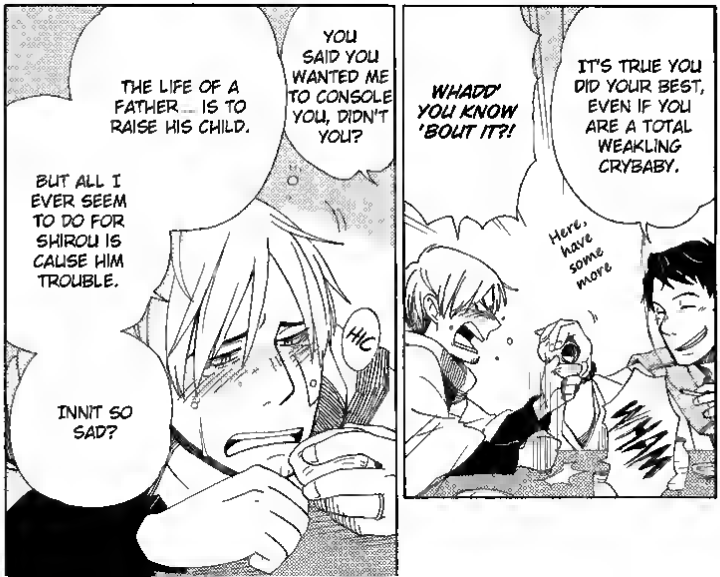
IF YOU EAT A LOT OF TASTY FOOD, YOU'LL FEEL BETTER!
...
HAVE SOME INARI, TOO!
RUB
Hee hee!

WHY ARE THERE ONLY FOODS TORA-KICHI AND SHIROU LIKE?
YOU'RE SO SLY, SIS.
...
More please!


RUSTLE


AAAAH! I'M SOOOO USELESS!
CLICK
Hee hee!

I'M GON' CRY!
YOU'RE S'PPOSED TA CONSOLE ME, YOU DAMN STINKIN' OLDER BROTHER!
HIC
WAVE
WOBBLE
YOU ALREADY ARE, AREN'T YOU?
DON'T BE SO NEGATIVE.
IT'S NOT LIKE THIS IS THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE EVER BEEN USELESS.
RIGHT, SOUMA?
Sure


YOU SAID YOU WANTED ME TO CONSOLE YOU, DIDN'T YOU?
THE LIFE OF A FATHER... IS TO RAISE HIS CHILD.
BUT ALL I EVER SEEM TO DO FOR SHIROU IS CAUSE HIM TROUBLE.
HIC
INNIT SO SAD?
WHADD' YOU KNOW 'BOUT IT?!
IT'S TRUE YOU DID YOUR BEST, EVEN IF YOU ARE A TOTAL WEAKLING CRYBABY.
Here, have some more
WHAM

AN' HE'S CUTE LIKE HIS MOM.
ehehh
PFFFT.
EVEN WI' SUCH A USE-LESS DAD...
HIC
HE'S TURNING INTO SUCH A GOOD KID.
I'M THE WORST! I'M NOT FIT TO BE A FATHER!
THERE THERE.
SFX WAAAAAH!
HA!
WHAT A FOOLISH FATHER HE IS!
THAT SMILE'S JUS' FOR ME, OKAY?!
I'm pullin' it in!
DON' YOU COMMEN' ON MY FACE!
PFFT
LOOK, NOW YOU'RE SMILING!
HUH? YOU THINK SO TOO, RIGHT?!
HIC
TUG

KANOE, THAT'S ENOUGH.
BE QUIET.
PFFF FFT!
NOOOOOO! I DON'T WANT SHIROU TO HATE ME!
WHAM
WELL, JUST TRY TO REMEMBER IT AS LONG AS YOU CAN. NO DOUBT IN TEN YEARS, YOU'LL BE STRUGGLING FOR THAT KIND OF REACTION.
But you already sound like an old man!
HA HA HA HA!
YOU'RE TERRIBLE!
WHAM
WAAAAAH!
IT'S NOT THAT YOU'LL BE HATED. YOU'LL JUST BE VIEWED AS SOMETHING EVEN MORE WORTHLESS THAN TOILET PAPER.
DON'T WORRY, TORAKICHI.
WHICH OF YOU IS THE ONE WHO GAVE TORA SAKE?
SWOOSH
SWOOSH
WHO WAS IT?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TODAY.
AH. SIS!
BOW
AND HE'S SUCH A PAIN WHEN HE'S DRUNK AND WHINY LIKE THIS...
YOU BOTH KNOW HE'S BAD AT HOLDING HIS LIQUOR!
...
Why did you only hit me...?
?!
I WOULD'VE JUST STAYED 'T HOME.
HIC
IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I ATE YOUR COOKING. IT WAS GREAT.
THANKS FOR INVITING ME.

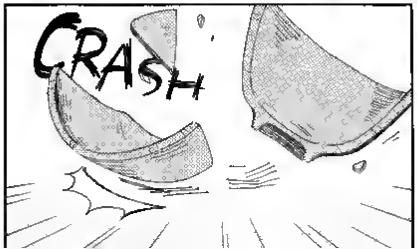
I...
WAS SO WORRIED 'BOUT A LOTTA STUFF ON MY WAY HERE, I GOT ALL SELF-CONSCI'S.
HIC
'THOUGH SHIROU RATTED ME OUT.
HEH HEH
OH.
AND LIS'N. NO GETTING' MAD!
BUT DON' WORRY.
'N' I DUNNO HOW SHIROU'LL DO WITH ME.
TRUTH IS, I'LL PROB'LY MAKE YOU WORRY AGAIN,
...

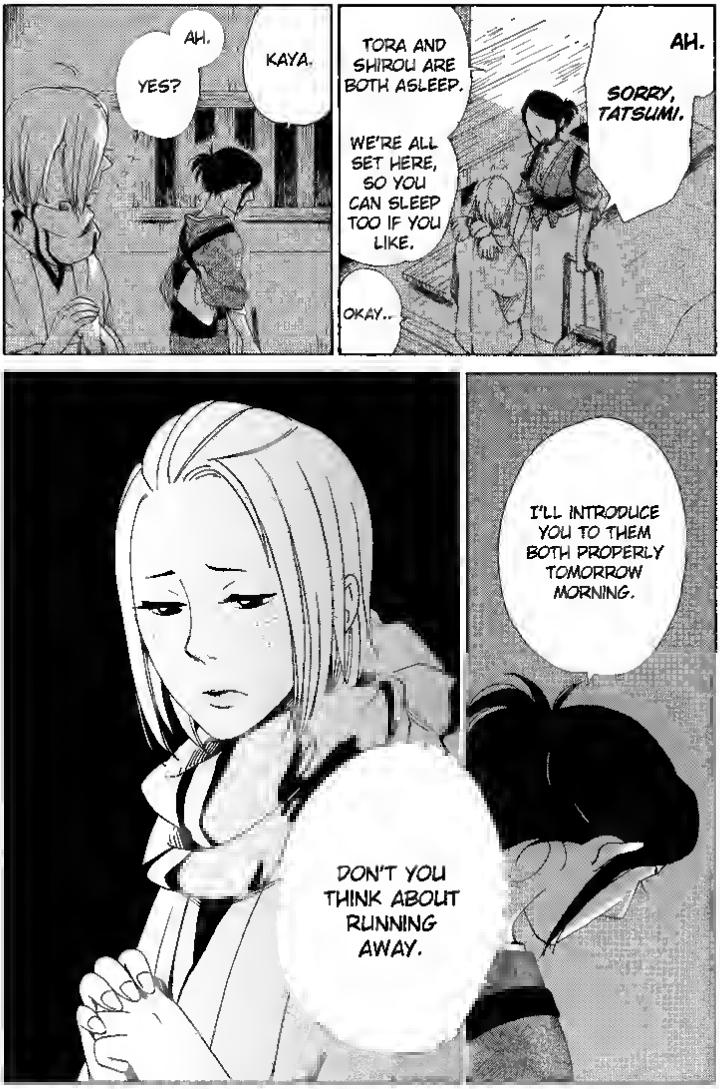
NOW THAT I'VE COME HOME, MY FEELINGS'VE TOT'LLY CHANGED!!
AN' I'M NOT GONNA MESS 'ROUND ANY MORE BEIN' ALL WISHY-WASHY!
I SWEAR IT TO SHIROU 'N' SHIORI!
FWISH
PLOP
PLOP
SO...
DON' WORRY. SIS.
...
HOW CAN ME BE SAYING THAT KIND OF THING WHILE CRYING...?
WHACK

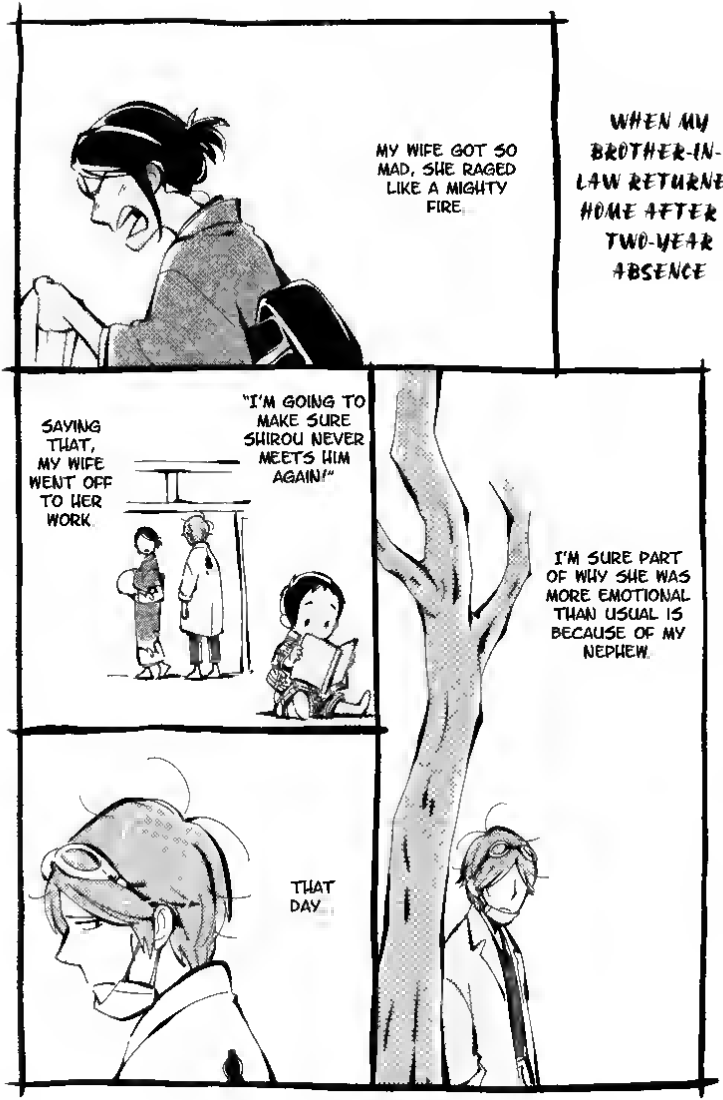
I...
GON' WORK HARD
SO YOU'LL ACCEPT ME PROP'RLY...
YEAH...?
zzz...

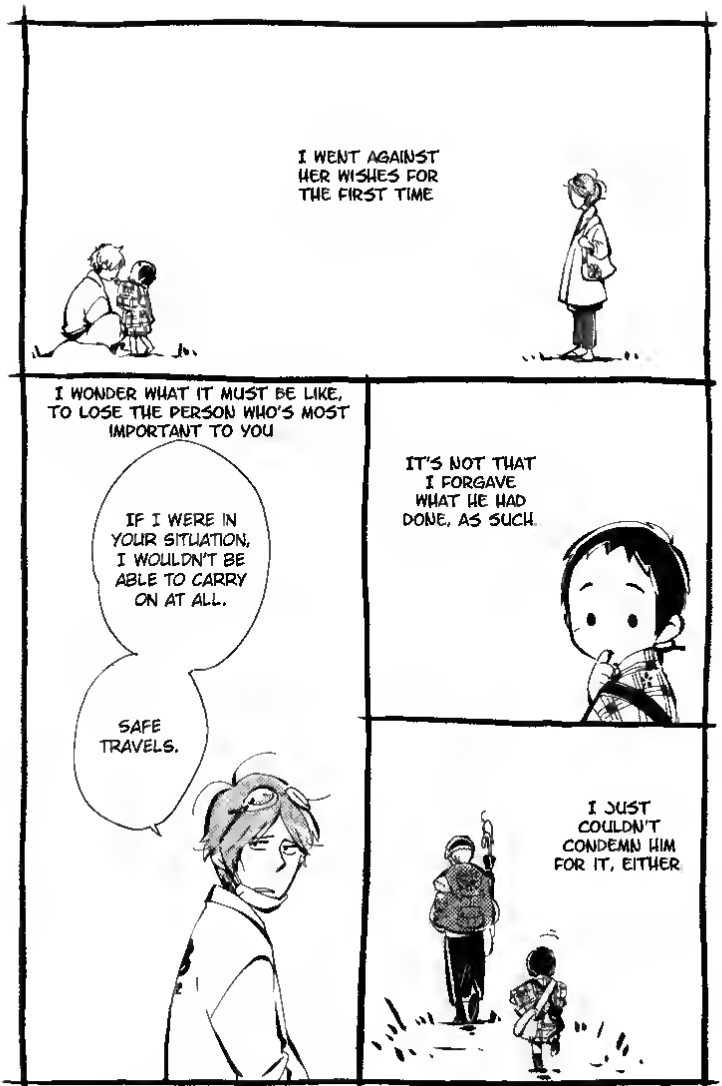
WHY ARE YOU STILL UP?
Hurgh! Souma, come help me.
I'll pass.
FLINCH

KANOE.
TAKE HIM OVER TO WHERE SHIROU IS, WILL YOU?
YEAH YEAH
Zzzz...


CRASH


KAYA.
AH.
YES?
AH.
SORRY, TATSUMI.
TORA AND SHIROU ARE BOTH ASLEEP.
WE'RE ALL SET HERE, SO YOU CAN SLEEP TOO IF YOU LIKE.
OKAY..
I'LL INTRODUCE YOU TO THEM BOTH PROPERLY TOMORROW MORNING.
DON'T YOU THINK ABOUT RUNNING AWAY.


WHEN MY BROTHER-IN-LAW RETURNED HOME AFTER A TWO-YEAR ABSENCE
MY WIFE GOT SO MAD, SHE RAGED LIKE A MIGHTY FIRE.
"I'M GOING TO MAKE SURE SHIROU NEVER MEETS HIM AGAIN!"
SAYING THAT, MY WIFE WENT OFF TO HER WORK.
I'M SURE PART OF WHY SHE WAS MORE EMOTIONAL THAN USUAL IS BECAUSE OF MY NEPHEW.
THAT DAY.


I WENT AGAINST HER WISHES FOR THE FIRST TIME
I WONDER WHAT IT MUST BE LIKE, TO LOSE THE PERSON WHO'S MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU
IF I WERE IN YOUR SITUATION, I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO CARRY ON AT ALL.
SAFE TRAVELS.
IT'S NOT THAT I FORGAVE WHAT HE HAD DONE, AS SUCH.
I JUST COULDN'T CONDEMN HIM FOR IT, EITHER.

EXTRA STORY TWELVE - END

Chichikogusa

Chapter 15

BY TAGAWA MI

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Translations/Edit by Thestripedone

Cleaning/Typesetting by Arleea

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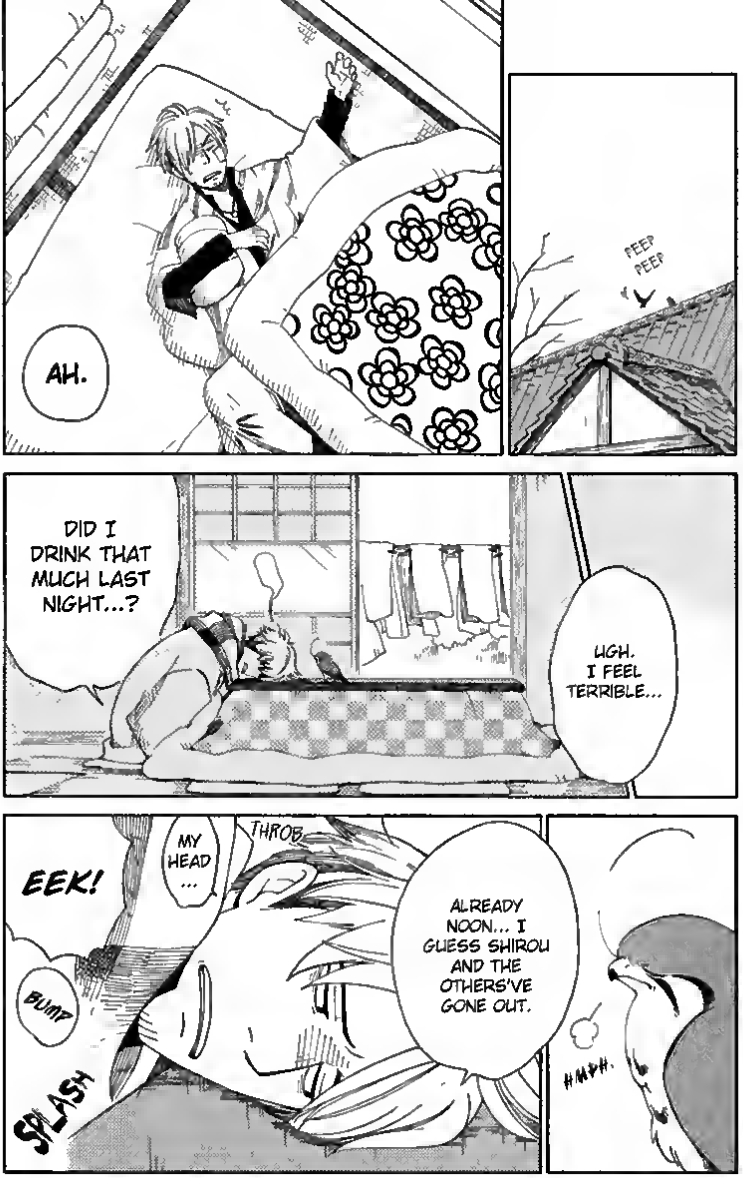
...
AND YOU SAY HER SON IS STILL A YEAR OLD?
IF THIS RAIN KEEPS UP, THE GROUND'LL BE MUSH.
POOR THING...
YOU WEREN'T WAKIN' UP. THE DOCTOR FIXED YOUR ARM.
HANA...
KAYA?!
WHERE'S SHIORI...?
IT'S ME! DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?!

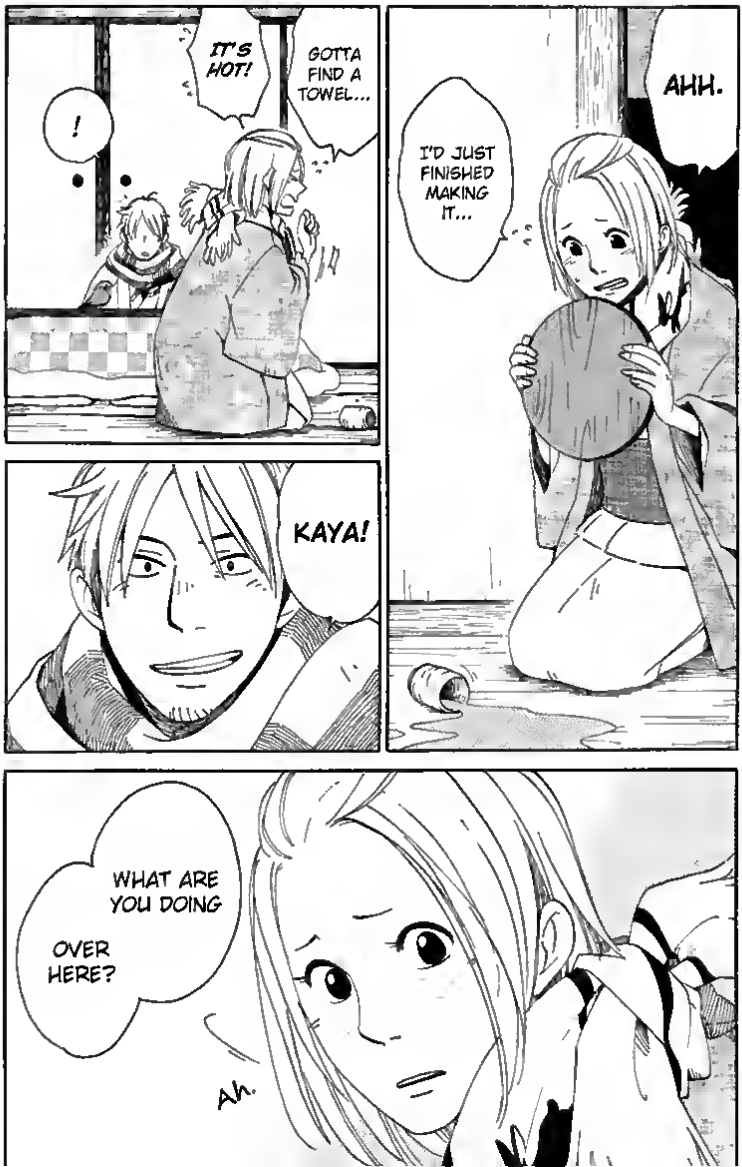
...
HEY, HANA...
WHERE'S SHIORI?!
SHE WAS... WITH ME.
KAYA...
CALM DOWN AND LISTEN.
SHIORI...

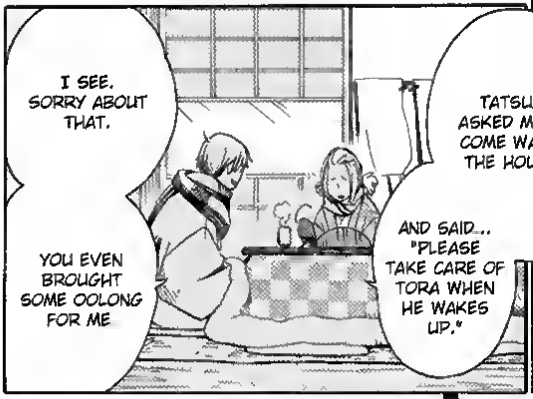
CHICHIKOGUSA
[FATHER AND CHILD GRASS]

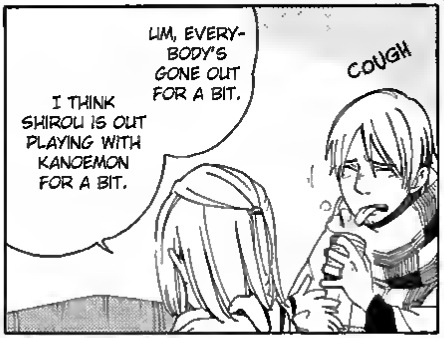
AUTHOR: TAGAWA MI

CHAPTER 15: SHIORI AND KAYA


AH.
PEEP PEEP
DID I DRINK THAT MUCH LAST NIGHT...?
UGH. I FEEL TERRIBLE...
EEK!
MY HEAD ...
THROB
BUMP
SPLASH
ALREADY NOON... I GUESS SHIROU AND THE OTHERS'VE GONE OUT.
HMPH.


AHH.
I'D JUST FINISHED MAKING IT...
IT'S HOT!
GOTTA FIND A TOWEL...
!
KAYA!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING OVER HERE?
Ah.


I SEE. SORRY ABOUT THAT.
YOU EVEN BROUGHT SOME OOLONG FOR ME
TATSUMI ASKED ME TO COME WATCH THE HOUSE.
AND SAID... "PLEASE TAKE CARE OF TORA WHEN HE WAKES UP."


I THINK SHIROU IS OUT PLAYING WITH KANOEMON FOR A BIT.
UM, EVERY-BODY'S GONE OUT FOR A BIT.
COUGH

ARE YOU ALL BETTER NOW, KAYA?
AH WHY DON'T I GO CALL FOR THEM?

[OOLONG TEA]
OOLONG
USES:
GOOD FOR FIGHTING OFF DISEASE AND STOMACHACHE. GOOD FOR HANGOVERS AS WELL.
IT'S PRETTY BITTER, THOUGH...
SIP

...
?!
WHAT AM I SAYING.
THAT WAS A LONG TIME AGO, HUH? BUT IT'S BEEN THREE YEARS SINCE THEN. EVEN IF I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU SINCE, IT'S SILLY TO ASK.
Ha ha.
AH, HOW'S HANA?
IS HE DOING WELL?
FLINCH
UH...
PROBABLY
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "PROBABLY"?
YOU'RE MARRIED, AIN'TCHA!
BUT I'M GLAD.

YOU SEEM WELL.
THUD
AH.
KAYA?!
DASH
HUH?

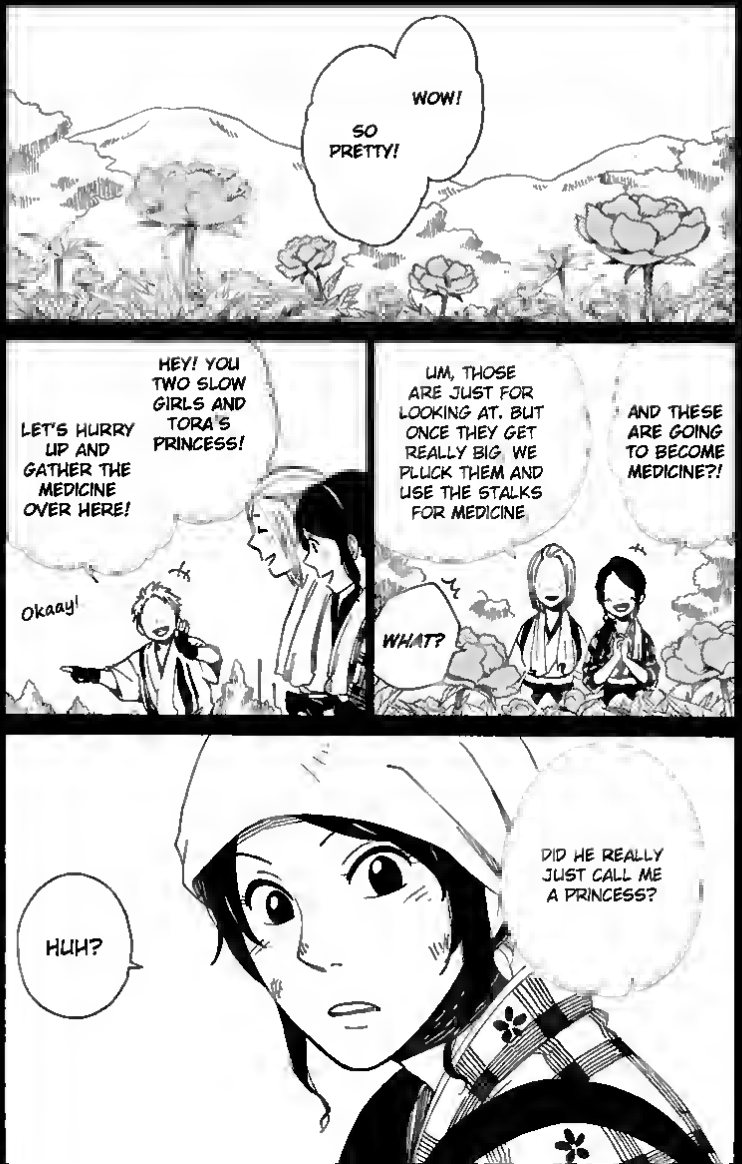
IT'S FINE. GO.
BIG BROTHER...
TAP TAP
MY SISTER'S BEEN HERE IN THIS HOUSE FOR TEN DAYS ALREADY.
WHAT?!

BUT IT SEEMS LIKE HER AND HER HUSBAND MAY BE AT THE END OF THINGS.
TATSUMI TOLD HER TO COME AND STAY WITH US FOR A WHILE.
...
I DON'T KNOW A GOOD WAY OF SAYING IT.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I GUESS YOU DIDN'T KNOW, RIGHT?
BUT THE TRUTH IS, SHIORI'S DEATH HURT A LOT OF PEOPLE OTHER THAN JUST YOU.
Ha ha ha!

KAYA?!
THUMP
EEK!
TORA! HANA! WAAIIT!
OW OW OW.
I'D NEVER HELP OUT A WEAK OL' GIRL!
Ha ha ha!
HER BROTHER SHOULD DO THAT.
WHY DON'T YOU HELP OUT KAYA A LITTLE?!
HANA, WAIT!
GRAB
Ah.
YEAH.
OKAY?
I'LL HELP YOU OUT INSTEAD.
DON'T CRY, KAYA.

YAY! HANA'S A SAMURAI!
WHAAT?
IS THIS EVIL OGRE SCARING YOU? TAKE CARE, OR HE'LL EAT YOU RIGHT UP!
I'M THE CHAMPION OF JUSTICE HANA THE SAMURAI!
UM...
EEEEK!
WHAT?! COME OVER HERE AND SAY THAT!
COME, KAYA! I'LL PROTECT YOU!

Hello.
PLEASED TO MEET YOU.
MY NAME IS SHIORI.
I'LL BE WORKING HERE WITH YOU ALL STARTING TODAY
GRIN


WOW!
SO PRETTY!
HEY! YOU TWO SLOW GIRLS AND TORA'S PRINCESS!
LET'S HURRY UP AND GATHER THE MEDICINE OVER HERE!
Okaay!
UM, THOSE ARE JUST FOR LOOKING AT. BUT ONCE THEY GET REALLY BIG WE PLUCK THEM AND USE THE STALKS FOR MEDICINE
AND THESE ARE GOING TO BECOME MEDICINE?!
WHAT?
HUH?
DID HE REALLY JUST CALL ME A PRINCESS?

DOES HE EVEN UNDERSTAND WHAT HE'S SAYING?
SMIRK SMIRK
Hana!
IF YOU DON'T TAKE A BRIDE YOU'RE JUST FOOLING AROUND IN THE DIRT.
OUT IN THE COUNTRY LIKE THIS,
HE'S CRAZY.
YOUR INTIMATE ENCOUNTERS, I MEAN!
SOUNDS GREAT! CAN YOU TELL ME ALL ABOUT IT?!
HANA!
BUT IT'S UNBELIEVABLE, RIGHT! I MEAN, EVEN THOUGH HE'S A MAN, HE'S SO TOTALLY IGNORANT OF THE WAY THE WORLD WORKS.
I feel sorry for him.

THAT'S WHY SO MANY PEOPLE GO TO WORK AS APPRENTICES THERE.
THERE ARE A TON OF MEDICINE SELLERS FROM HERE, TOO. THE FOUNDER OF NANAKUSAYA, WHERE TORA WORKS, IS FROM HERE.

*Footnote: These phrases sound similar in Japanese. Shion appears to have some vocabulary problems, both here and elsewhere in this chapter.

WITH THE TWO OF US HERE, I FEEL MORE LIKE "WE'D BETTER DO OUR PART!" IT MAKES ME HAPPY
BUT,
I...
SEEING AS HOW TORA'S GONE FOR WORK, AND I'M ALONE...
HAD A LOT OF INSECURITIES.
DONG DONG
KAYA, YOU AND HANAMARU AND TORA HAVE BEEN CHI... UH, CHIL...
"CHILDHOOD FRIENDS"?
YEAH! TELL ME ALL YOUR STORIES ABOUT TORA WHEN HE WAS SMALL!
OH, HEY, KAYA.
SURE.
AH...
IS IT OKAY IF I SPEAK TO YOU SO INFORMALLY?

Happy new year!
THIS TEMPLE IS WELL-KNOWN FOR HELPING HAVE CHILDREN
EVERYONE FROM THE VILLAGE PUTS UP A VOTIVE TABLET* HERE WHEN THEY WANT KIDS
WOOW!
HEY, WHY DON'T WE DO IT TOO?!
WHAT?
WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG? GEEZ.
IT'S A SECRET!
Right?
I can't drink my more...
NGG
?

(*Footnote. Small wooden plaques where Shinto believers write their prayers. See http://bit.ly/HekOzS)

GIVE HIM TO SANA NOW, KAYA!
HE REALLY LOOKS LIKE YOU, SHIORI!
HIS NOSE REMINDS ME OF TORA.
Wow!
SO CUTE!
I'M A LITTLE JEALOUS!
OKAY! SANA WILL BE YOUR PAPA NUMBER TWO!
MY OLDER SISTER HAS A TON OF KIDS.
I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO STILL DOESN'T HAVE ANY.
...
DON'T WORRY.

I'M SURE YOU'LL BE NEXT, KAYA!
TO HAVE KIDS!
RIGHT?!
I...
I WONDER...
子宝祈願
子孫繁栄
子がほしいカヤ
YOUR WIFE STILL HASN'T CONCEIVED?!
HANA YOU'RE MY ELDEST SON. YOU NEED TO GET ON WITH IT ALREADY!
...

I MEAN, LOOK AT TORA'S WIFE'S KID. ALL HE DOES IS CRY CONSTANTLY. IT'S SO NOISY.
KIDS'RE BASICALLY JUST TROUBLE ANYWAY.
DON'T LET WHAT MY OLD MAN SAID GET TO YA!
THEN...
HMM.
NOT REALLY.
HANA, YOU DON'T REALLY WANT ANY KIDS...?

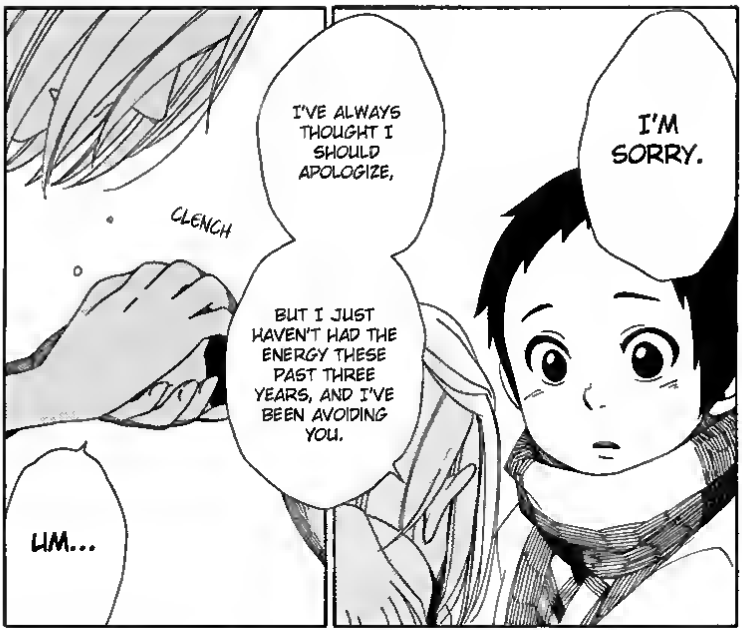
TORA STILL DOESN'T REALLY PLAY WITH SHIROU AND HE SAID HE'S GOING BACK TO WORK ALREADY TOMORROW!
...
Ha Ha
I SEE...
BUT MEN ARE ALL LIKE THAT.
FSSSHHH
DON'T WORRY SO MUCH OVER IT
I'M SURE HE'LL FORGET ABOUT THIS AND YOU'LL HAVE A CHILD.
KAYA...
SHIORI. YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND.
WOW, LOOK AT YOU GO!
AHH!

WHAT?
GASP
SHOCK
HA HA HA HA HA!
THAT DOESN'T SUIT YOU AT ALL!
WAAAAAH!
AAAAH!

THEY LEFT A WHILE AGO.
THEY WERE GONNA GO UP TO THE SHRINE ON THE MOUNTAIN PEAK.
BUT SHIROU'S ALREADY AT HIS LIMIT.
I KNOW SHE WASN'T SUPPOSED TO COME BACK UNTIL NIGHTFALL.
SHUT UP. I ASKED YOU WHERE SHIORI IS.
HA HA!
WA
THEY BOTH SHOT OUT OF HERE IN A HURRY.
YEAH. THAT'S WHAT SHE SAID TO KAYA.
WAAAAH!
WAAAH!
THE SHRINE?
HANAMARU, TORAKICHI! SOMETHING TERRIBLE'S HAPPENED!
YOUR WIVES... THEY...!
THERE YOU ARE!
DASH
I GUESS THEY'RE JUST HANGIN' AROUND CHATTING LIKE USUAL. YOU KNOW?
Dammit

KAYA!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING WAY UP HERE?
DID THE DRUNKARD FROM LAST NIGHT WAKE UP?
SHIROU, DO YOU REMEMBER KAYA?
SHE'S A FRIEND OF YOUR MOM AND DAD.

YEAH! SHIROU REMEMBERS!
SHIROU...
SHIROU...
RUSTLE


I'M SORRY.
I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT I SHOULD APOLOGIZE,
CLENCH
BUT I JUST HAVEN'T HAD THE ENERGY THESE PAST THREE YEARS, AND I'VE BEEN AVOIDING YOU.
UM...

THE REASON YOUR MOTHER DIED...
IT WAS ALL MY FAULT.
I'M SORRY...

HANA!
EXPLAIN IT TO ME...
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?
PANT
PANT

CHATTER
DID MY MOM TELL YOU ABOUT IT?
YOU SURE FOUND ME QUICK, HUH?
WELL, THAT'S OKAY. THIS IS MY HIDEOUT.
CHATTER
CHATTER
I TOLD HER NOT TO, AN' ALL, BUT...
HEY.
WELL, LOOK WHO THE CAT DRAGGED IN.
I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D REALLY SHOW.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO RAN AWAY...
WHAT THE HELL'VE YOU BEEN DOING WHILE I WASN'T HERE?!
AND THAT YOU GUYS'RE BREAKING UP BECAUSE OF IT?
IS IT TRUE THAT KAYA THINKS SHIORI'S DEATH IS HER FAULT?!

HURRY...
PLEASE, TORA... YOU HAVE TO SAVE KAYA!

SO WHOSE FAULT DO YOU THINK THIS IS, ANYWAY?!

AH!
IF I LEAVE THE ROOM FOR A WHILE...
IT LOOKS LIKE WHILE I WAS OUT, SHIROU AND TORA HAVE BEEN PLAYING(?) TOGETHER
ALL HE'S DOING IS SITTING THERE SPINNING TOPS SILENTLY.
AND SHIROU LOOKS LIKE HE WANTS TO GO OVER, BUT ISN'T

EXTRA STORY THIRTEEN - END

Chichikogusa

Chapter 16

BY TAGAWA MI

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CHICHIROGUSA
[FATHER AND CHILD GRASS]
AUTHOR TAGAWA MI
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
KAYA!
CHAPTER 16: SHIORI'S WISH

FOUND YOU!
YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD STAY HIDDEN THIS CLOSE TO THE HOUSE?
...
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE

UM...
NOW THE PATH WON'T BE DANGER-OUS ANY MORE!
ISN'T IT GREAT?
THERE'S A NEW FENCE HERE NOW, Y'KNOW.
I HELPED BUILD IT, TOO.
I SPENT A LOT OF TIME COM-PLAINING TO SHIORI ABOUT HOW I HADN'T HAD KIDS.
BEFORE THE ACCIDENT.
THE DAY...
THAT'S NOT THE POINT!
HEY, NOW. THAT ACCIDENT HAPPENED BECAUSE THE RAIN THE DAY BEFORE WORE AWAY AT THE PATH.
SHIORI PROBABLY NEVER WOULD HAVE SLIPPED ON THIS PATH...
IF I HADN'T SAID THAT.

THE ONLY REASON SHIORI WAS EVEN HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE IS BECAUSE SHE WAS GOING TO WALK ME TO THE SHRINE.
SHE SAID SHE WAS GOING TO TEACH ME A GOOD WAY TO GET PREGNANT...!

AND THE REASON SHE KEEPS THINKING THOSE DEPRESSING THOUGHTS IS ALL BECAUSE OF ME.
THE REASON SHE SAID SHE DOESN'T WANT TO COME HOME,
!

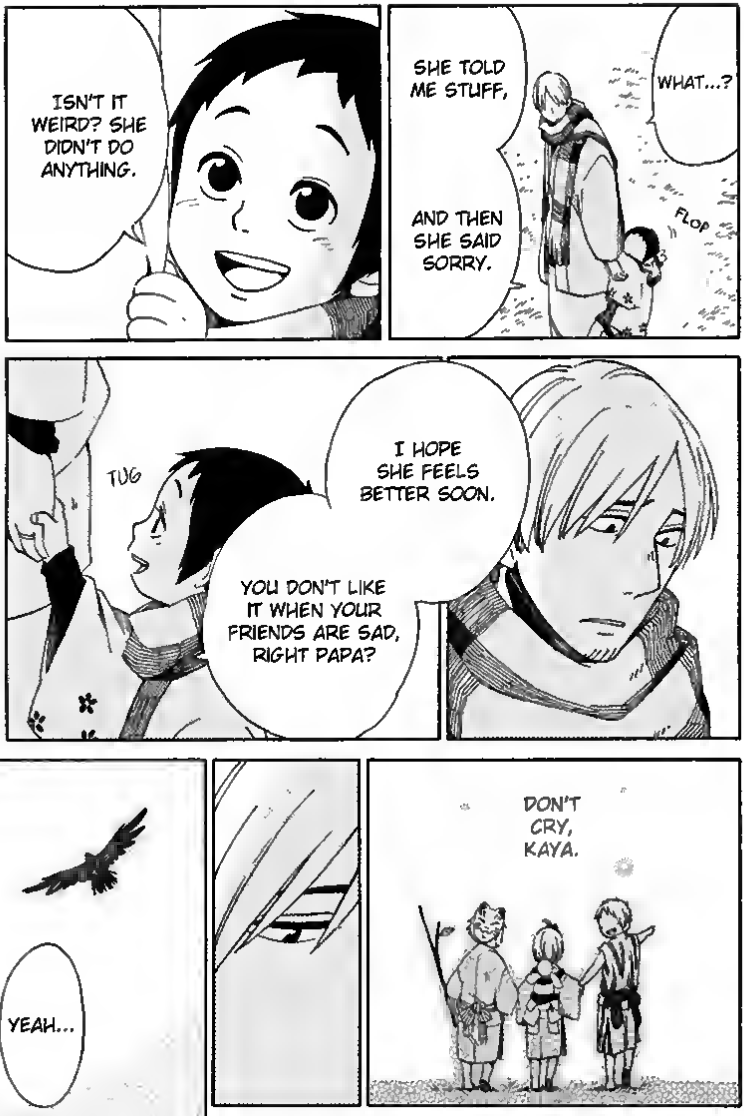
IF I HADN'T SAID ALL THAT STUFF,
SHIORI WOULD STILL BE...

KAYA...
NEVER FORGAVE HERSELF FOR BEING THE ONLY SURVIVOR...
AFTER FALLING OFF THE CLIFF WITH SHIORI.
I TOLD HER OVER AND OVER AGAIN THAT SHE WASN'T TO BLAME,
BUT...
NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I SAID IT, IT DIDN'T REACH HER.
WE...
HAVEN'T EVEN BEEN ABLE TO HOLD A SINGLE CONVERSATION LIKE WE USED TO.
...

!
WELCOME BACK, UNCLE TORA!
AH!
WHERE DID YOU GO?!
GRAB

KAAAAA-YAAAAA!
IS KAYA HERE?
YEAH, SHE'S INSIDE.
AH, IT'S OKAY. I WAS JUST ASKING.
OH, GOOD! SHIROU'S PERKING UP AGAIN NOW.
SHIROU DIDN'T CRY AT ALL!
HEY, SHIROU AND I ARE GOING TO STAY AT OUR OWN PLACE, JUST FOR TODAY.
WHAT?! EVEN THOUGH IT'S NEW YEAR'S EVE?!
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO WELCOME THE NEW YEAR WITH EVERYONE?! MOM'LL BE MAD!
OH. THAT'S RIGHT. I ALSO HAVE A REQUEST FOR YOU TWO.
A REQUEST?!

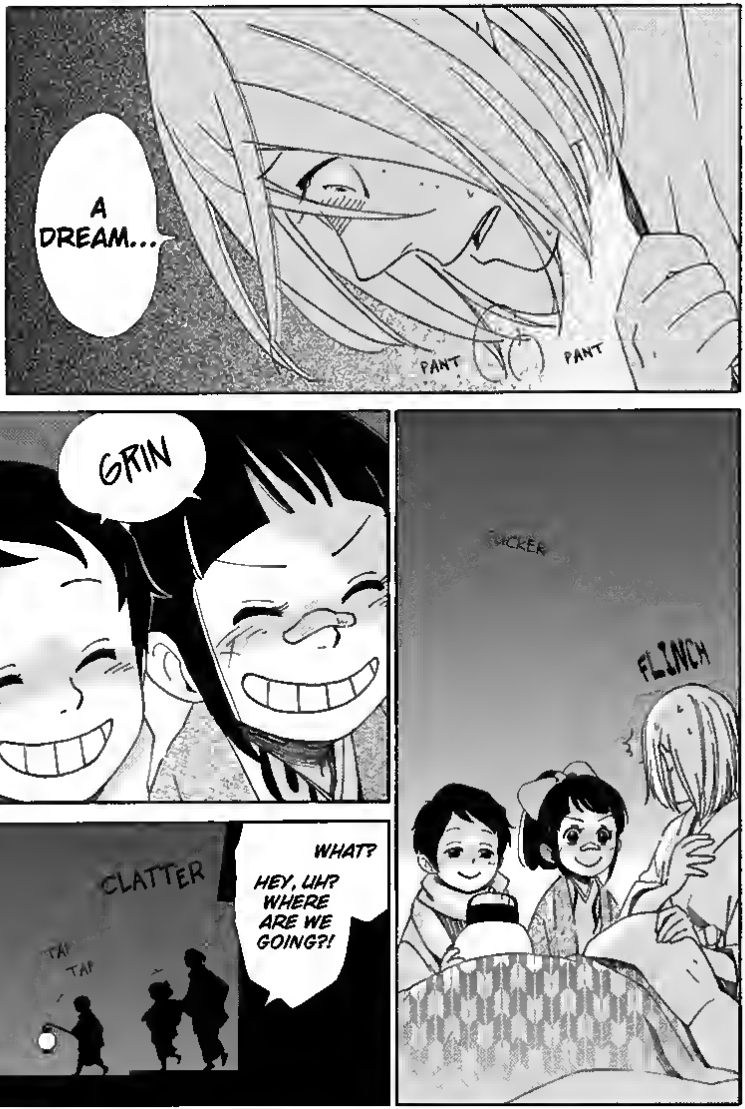
RUSTLE
LATER!
...
YEAH! LEAVE IT TO US!
PAPA.
HM?
KAYA WAS CRYING EARLIER.

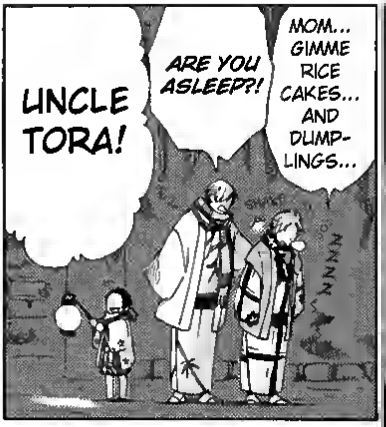

ISN'T IT WEIRD? SHE DIDN'T DO ANYTHING.
SHE TOLD ME STUFF,
AND THEN SHE SAID SORRY.
WHAT...?
FLOP
TUG
I HOPE SHE FEELS BETTER SOON.
YOU DON'T LIKE IT WHEN YOUR FRIENDS ARE SAD, RIGHT PAPA?
YEAH...
DON'T CRY, KAYA.

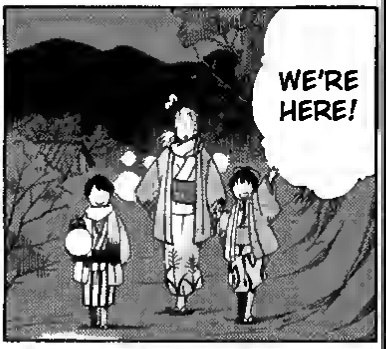
POOOONG
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
I HATE IT.
PONG
SLIP
...
OKAY...
PANT
PANT

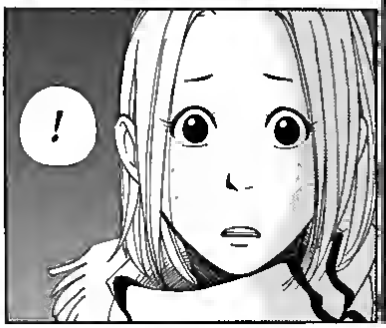
WHAT'S UP? OUT FOR A WALK?
AH, KAYA!
SORRY. I...
SHIORI!
TO APOLOGIZE FOR YESTERDAY...
I WANTED...
ANYWAY, LOOK AT THIS! THERE'S SOME PRETTY FLOWERS DOWN HERE.
WHAT...?
I WONDER IF THEY HAVE MEDICINAL PROPERTIES TOO.
HUH?
ABOUT WHAT?

SHIORI!
CRUMBLE
THRUST
?!


A DREAM...
PANT
PANT
GRIN
FLINCH
CLATTER
TAP
TAP
WHAT?
HEY, UH? WHERE ARE WE GOING?!


UNCLE TORA!
ARE YOU ASLEEP?!
MOM... GIMME RICE CAKES... AND DUMP-LINGS...
ZZZZ

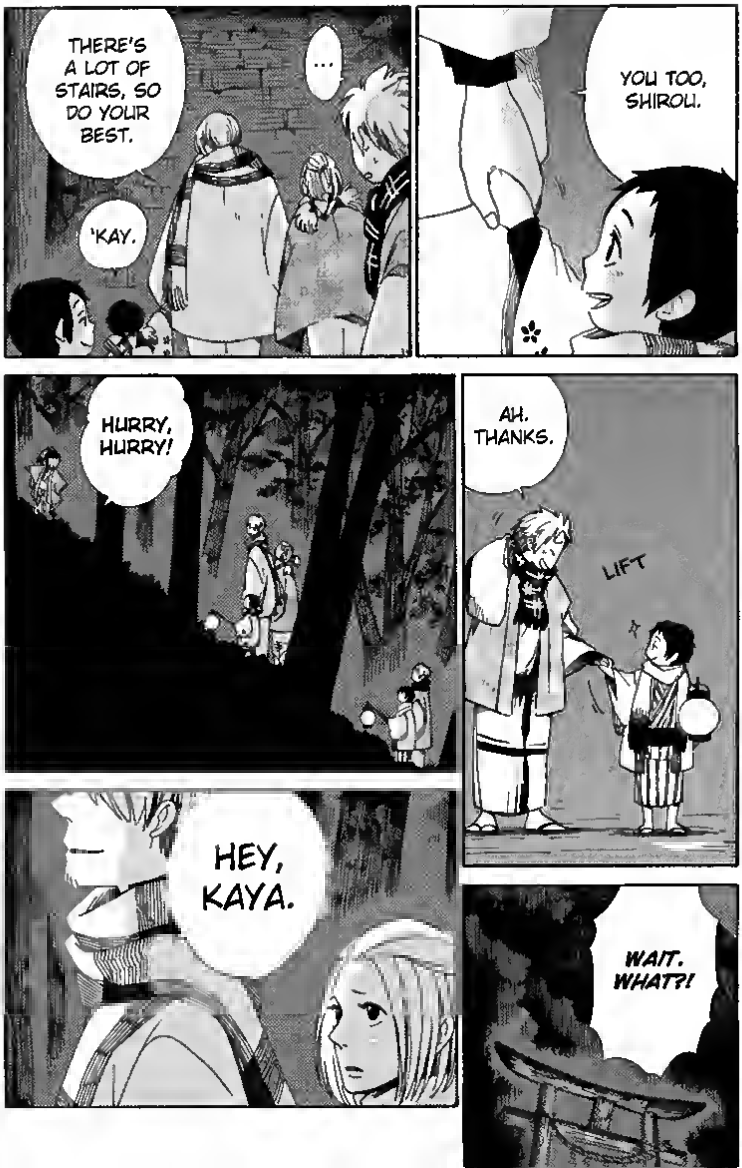

WE'RE HERE!


!

HELLO!
HAPPY NEW YEAR!

KAYA...
IF WE DON'T HURRY, THE SUN'LL BE UP ALREADY!
LET'S GO, LET'S GO!
IT'S BEEN A WHILE.
I THOUGHT IT'D BE GREAT TO SEE THE FIRST SUNRISE WITH YOU BOTH.
...

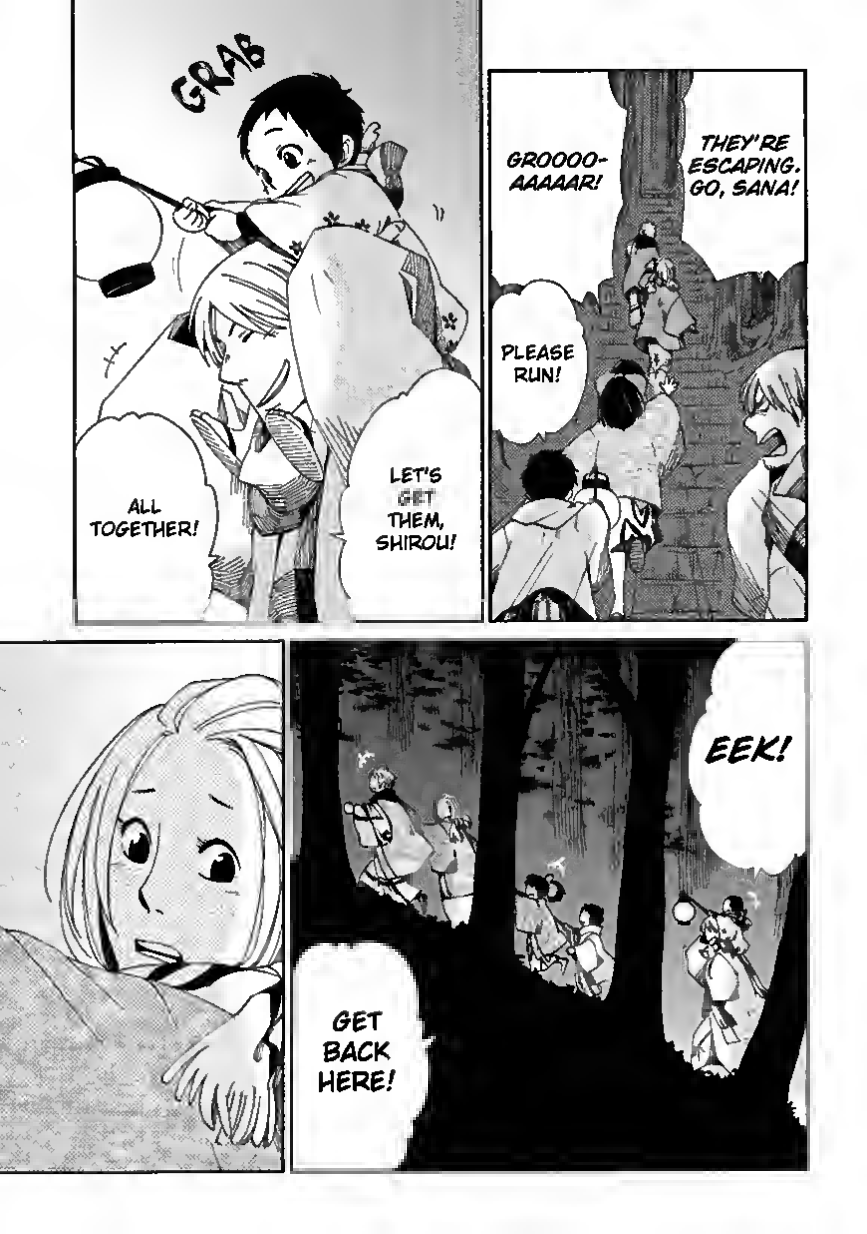
GRAB
WHAT?!
LET'S GO.

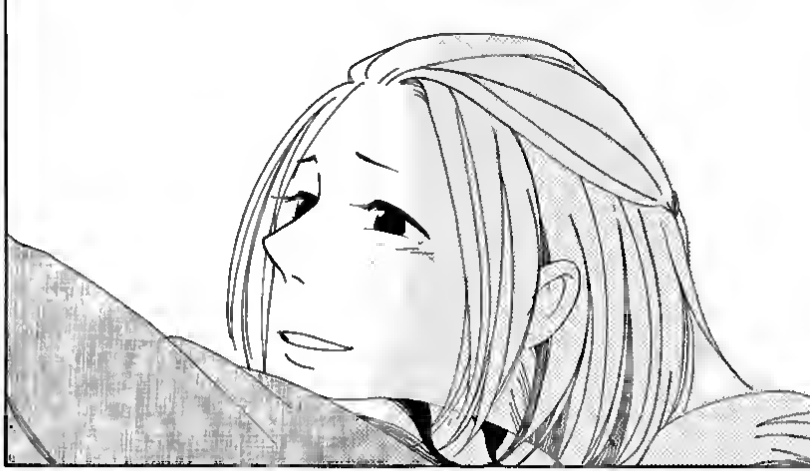

THERE'S A LOT OF STAIRS, SO DO YOUR BEST.
...
'KAY.
YOU TOO, SHIROU.
HURRY, HURRY!
AH. THANKS.
LIFT
HEY, KAYA.
WAIT. WHAT?!

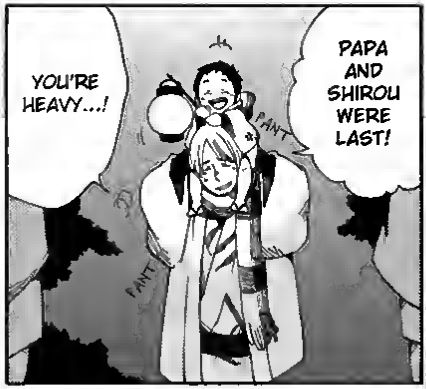
IF HANA'S NO GOOD,
WHY DON'T YOU COME WITH ME?
?!
WHAT?!
I KNOW IT'S SUDDEN,
BUT I BET WE COULD HAVE A KID STRAIGHT AWAY. DON'T YOU THINK?

SO YOU'VE COME OUT, HANAMARU SAMURAI!
Ha ha ha!
WHOSE WIFE D'YOU THINK THAT IS...?!
HEY, YOU STUPID MEDICINE SELLER!
?
BWAHA-HAHAHA! I'M GONNA EATCHA!
GROAR
GET HIM, SANA!
IF YOU WANT YOUR PRINCESS BACK, YOU'LL HAVE TO DEFEAT ME!
GRAB
?!
I'VE CAST A CHARM ON THIS.
PLEASE USE IT TO RESCUE HER.
SIR HANA-MARU.
WHAT?

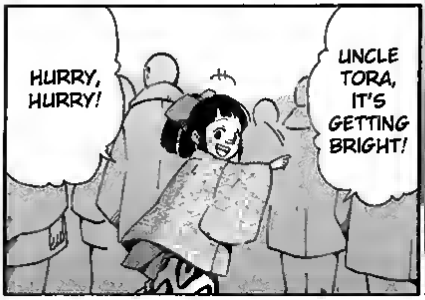
I SEE.
IF THAT'S HOW IT IS...
TAKE THIS!
THRUST
OW!
HEY! YOU DIDN'T HAFTA REALLY STAB ME!
DASH
ha ha ha ha ha ha!
LET'S GO, KAYA!


GRAB
LET'S GET THEM, SHIROU!
ALL TOGETHER!
GROOOO-AAAAAR!
THEY'RE ESCAPING. GO, SANA!
PLEASE RUN!
EEK!
GET BACK HERE!



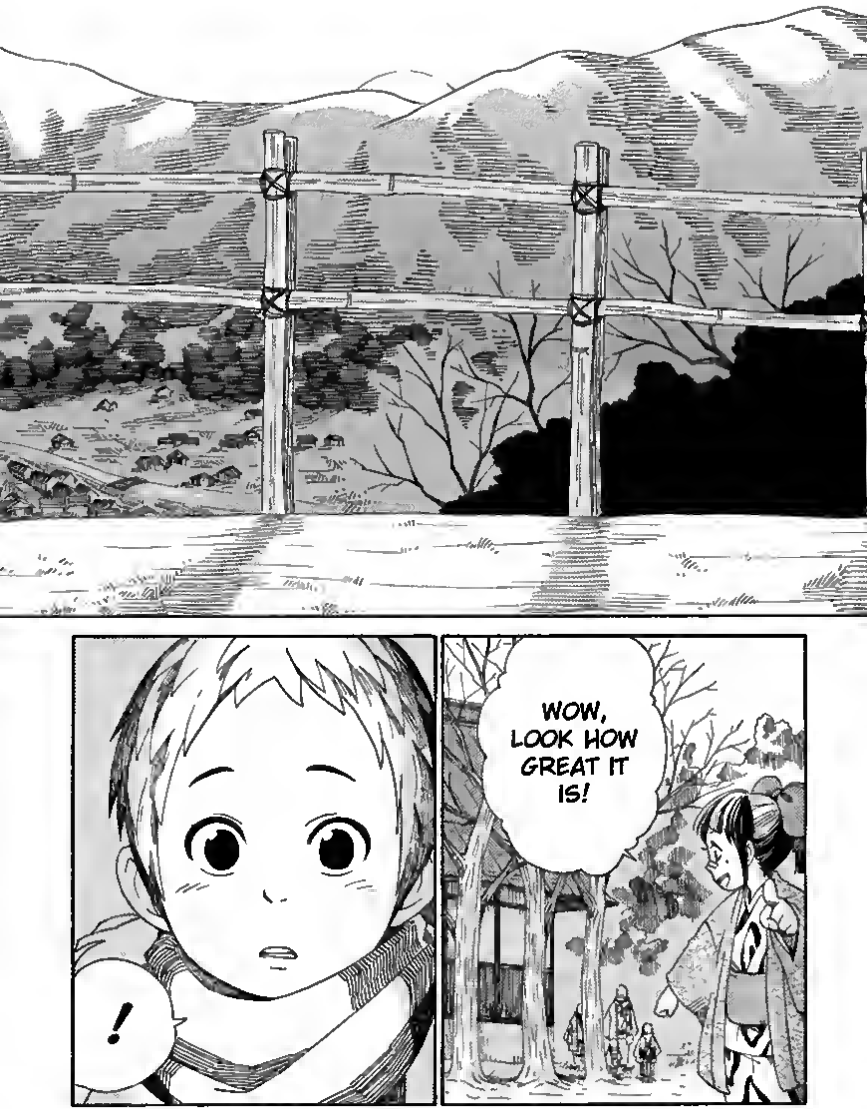

YOU'RE HEAVY...!
PAPA AND SHIROU WERE LAST!
PANT
PANT

CLAP CLAP
CHATTER CHATTER

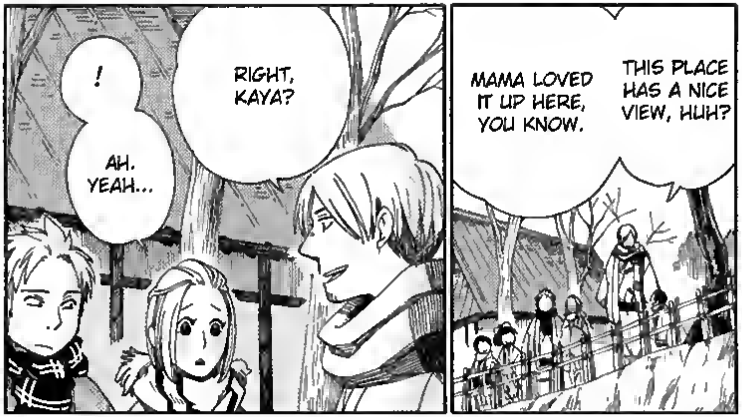

HURRY, HURRY!
UNCLE TORA, IT'S GETTING BRIGHT!

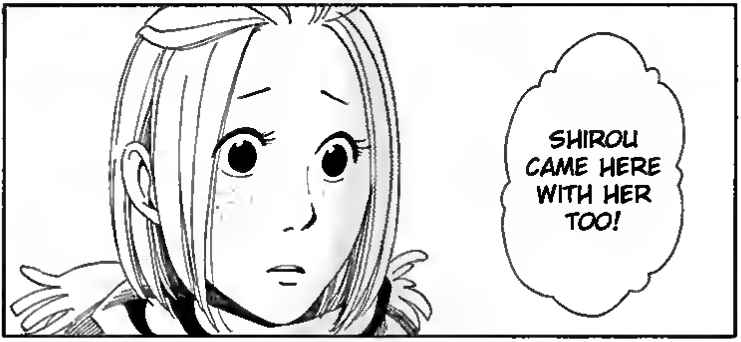
PANT
PANT
YAAAY, SANA GOT FIRST PLACE!

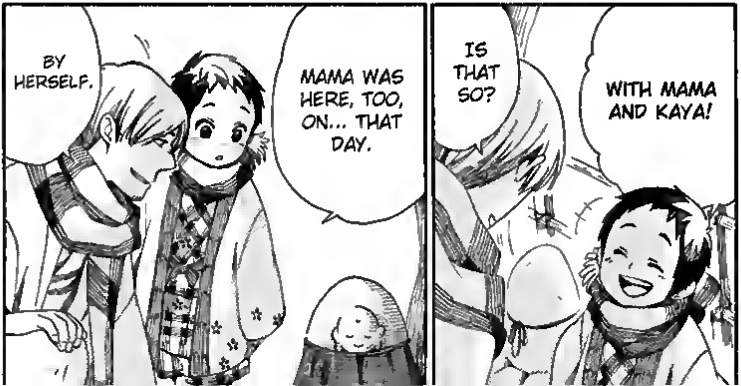
YEAH.
Foo
Foo
!
GRAB


!
WOW, LOOK HOW GREAT IT IS!

MAMA'S HERE!
TAP


RIGHT, KAYA?
!
AH. YEAH...
THIS PLACE HAS A NICE VIEW, HUH?
MAMA LOVED IT UP HERE, YOU KNOW.

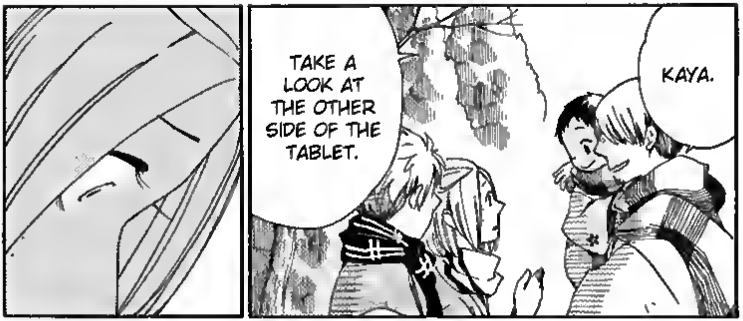

SHIROU CAME HERE WITH HER TOO!


BY HERSELF.
MAMA WAS HERE, TOO, ON... THAT DAY.
IS THAT SO?
WITH MAMA AND KAYA!

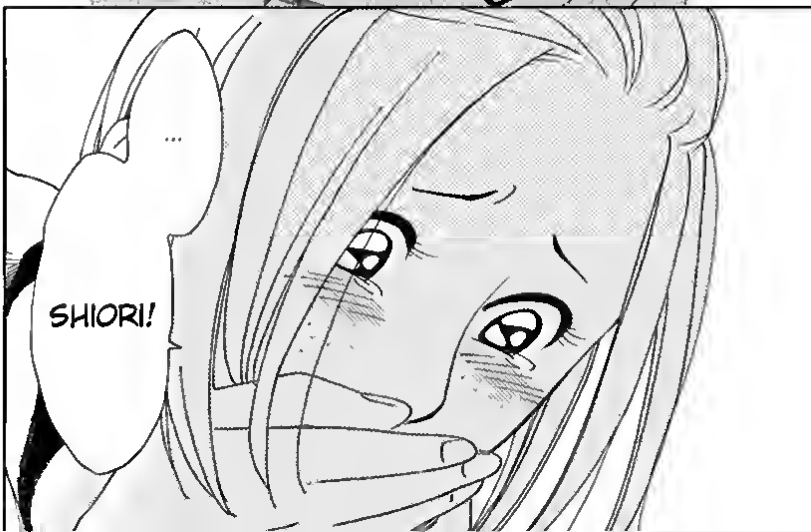
WHEN I HEARD THAT SHE'D FALLEN,
I WONDERED WHY SHE'D COME UP HERE.
I WONDERED WHY SHE WOULD COME UP TO A PLACE LIKE THIS WITHOUT EVEN ASKING.
BUT IT WAS FOR MY SAKE.
BACK THEN, I STILL WASN'T USED TO YOU AT ALL, SHIROU.
BEFORE I COULD SET OFF AGAIN ON ANOTHER LONG JOURNEY FOR WORK,
SHE WANTED TO MAKE SURE I HAD SPENT SOME TIME WITH YOU.
HERE. LOOK AT THIS.
BRUSH
!

PLEASE LET TORA AND SHIROU GET ALONG WELL.
SHIORI
ALL I COULD THINK ABOUT BACK THEN WAS HOW SCARED I WAS. HOW MUCH REMORSE I HAD.
I COULDN'T FACE MY RESPONSIBILITIES TO MY FAMILY FOR A LONG TIME.
WHEN I SAW THAT AFTER THE ACCIDENT, MY VISION WENT COMPLETELY BLACK.
EVEN NOW, I FEEL REGRETFUL ABOUT IT.
I RAN AWAY BECAUSE I DIDN'T WANT TO THINK ABOUT IT.

I'M A TERRBILE FATHER.
I'M STILL NOT REALLY USED TO IT, I GUESS.
BUT RIGHT NOW,
RUFFLE
BUT ANY TIME I DO, I JUST LOOK AT THIS KID'S SMILE.
I REALLY WANT TO FOCUS ON MAKING HIM SMILE MORE AND MORE.
THAT'S ALL I LET MYSELF THINK ABOUT.


TAKE A LOOK AT THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TABLET.
KAYA.

PLEASE LET KAYA FEEL HAPPIER SOON.
SHIORI


...
SHIORI!

THERE ARE STILL A LOT OF WORRIES I HAVE.
BUT SHIROU AND I ARE OKAY NOW.
SO...
PLEASE TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOURSELF, TOO, AND MAKE EACH OTHER SMILE.

THAT'S WHAT SHIORI WOULD HAVE WANTED.

I PAID A VISIT TO KAYA'S BROTHER, WHO WAS STUDYING MEDICINE
IT MUST HAVE BEEN FIVE YEARS AGO NOW.
TELL ME WHAT YOU CAME HERE FOR AND LEAVE.
WOW, THIS LOOKS REAL PRETTY IF YOU SHAKE IT!
AT THE TIME, WE'D BEEN LIVING TOGETHER FOR TWO YEARS ALREADY, BUT HADN'T BEEN ABLE TO HAVE ANY CHIDLREN.
KAYA SEEMS A LITTLE DIST-RESSED LATELY.

BROTHER-IN-LAW SOUMA,
YOU WORK MAKING MEDICINE FOR PEOPLE, RIGHT?
GIVE HER SOMETHING SO SHE CAN CONCEIVE, OKAY?
IT'S NOT EXACTLY THAT EASY.
KAYA HAD DREAMED OF HOLDING A CHILD IN HER ARMS SINCE SHE WAS ONE HER-SELF
I THOUGHT IT'D BE NICE TO SEE THAT IN REAL LIFE, TOO
BUT...
I DIDN'T WANT TO MAKE A BIG DEAL OUT OF IT, IF WE COULDN'T
I WONDER WHAT THE BEST THING IS FOR ME TO DO..?

EXTRA STORY FOURTEEN - END

Chichikogusa

Chapter 17

BY TAGAWA MI

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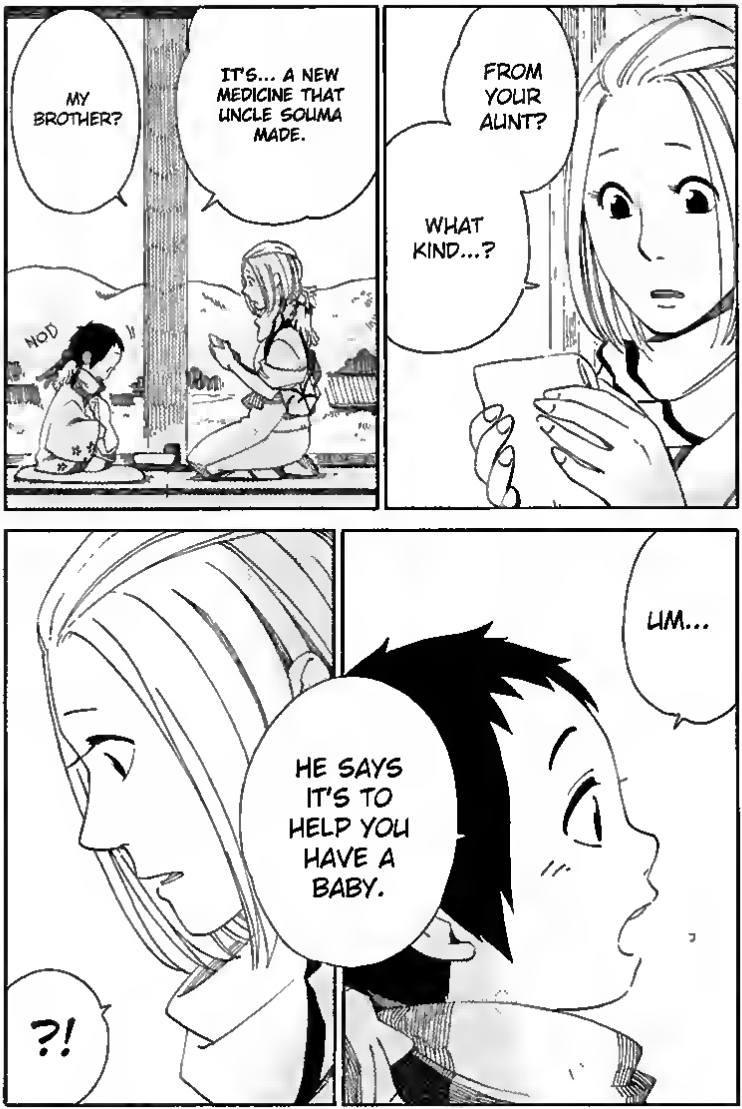
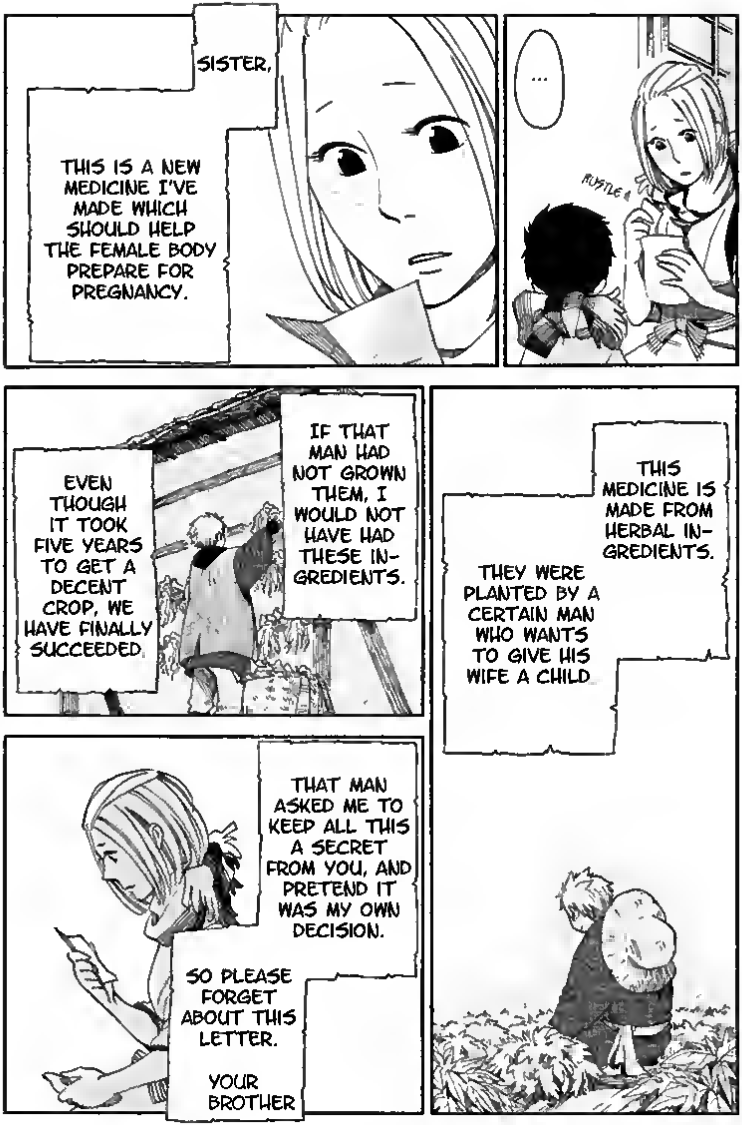
CHICHIKOGUSA
[FATHER AND CHILD GRASS]
AUTHOR: TAGAWA KII
CHAPTER 17:
SHIROU AND THE BROTHER AND SISTER
FIDGET
FIDGET

WE HAVE A GUEST.
YES?
KAYA!
GULP
SOME MEDICINE.
I BROUGHT ...
YES...
WOW, DID YOU COME ALL BY YOURSELF?
UM.
FIDGET FIDGET

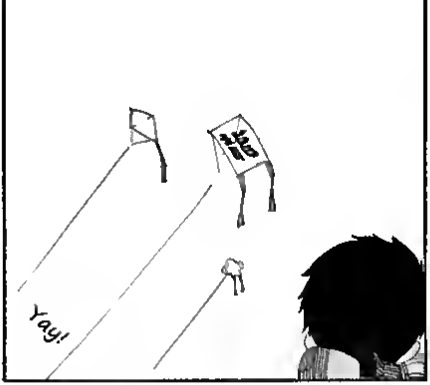

MY BROTHER?
IT'S... A NEW MEDICINE THAT UNCLE SOUMA MADE.
NOD
FROM YOUR AUNT?
WHAT KIND...?
UM...
HE SAYS IT'S TO HELP YOU HAVE A BABY.
?!

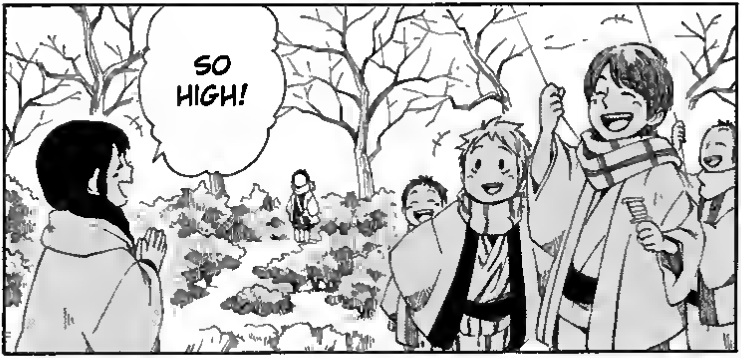

SISTER,
THIS IS A NEW MEDICINE I'VE MADE WHICH SHOULD HELP THE FEMALE BODY PREPARE FOR PREGNANCY.
...
RUSTLE
EVEN THOUGH IT TOOK FIVE YEARS TO GET A DECENT CROP, WE HAVE FINALLY SUCCEEDED.
IF THAT MAN HAD NOT GROWN THEM, I WOULD NOT HAVE HAD THESE INGREDIENTS.
THIS MEDICINE IS MADE FROM HERBAL INGREDIENTS.
THEY WERE PLANTED BY A CERTAIN MAN WHO WANTS TO GIVE HIS WIFE A CHILD.
THAT MAN ASKED ME TO KEEP ALL THIS A SECRET FROM YOU, AND PRETEND IT WAS MY OWN DECISION.
SO PLEASE FORGET ABOUT THIS LETTER.
YOUR BROTHER

ITS NAME* MEANS THAT ANY SICKNESS WILL GO AWAY AND YOU'LL FEEL BETTER, AND IT WON'T COME BACK AGAIN.
IT'S "ANGELICA ROOT"!
[ANGELICA ROOT]
ANGELICAE RADIX
EFFECTIVENESS:
HEALS ILLNESSES, ETCETERA
(NOTE THE JAPANESE NAME, TOUKI (当帰), LITERALLY READS "ARRIVE AT RIGHTNESS")
THANK YOU.
HUH?
I WAS GOING TO GIVE HIM SOME DAIKON...
HUH? THE LITTLE GUY WENT HOME ALREADY?

PEEK
RUSTLE
...
TAP
TAP
TAP

DOING ERRANDS LIKE THIS ALL BY YOURSELF...
YOU'RE GROWING UP, SHIROU.
YEAH.
I DRANK SO MUCH YESTERDAY THAT SOME SAKE GOT IN MY EYES ..
WAIT.
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN SITTING THERE?!
SNIFF
Both of us
THE WHOLE TIME, OBVIOUSLY.
PEEK
YOU TOO?!
WHAT'S WITH YOU TWO? CAN'T A GUY GET ANY PRIVACY...?
HOW RUDE.
IF I DON'T EXPOSE MYSELF, MY ALLERGIES TO FLOWERS WILL NEVER STOP, AND MY MUCUS WILL KEEP MAKING ME...
AHOO.
IT'S WINTER. THERE ARE NO FLOWERS.
YOU'RE PROBABLY CURSED. I BET SOME EVIL SPIRIT HAS A GRUDGE AGAINST YOU.
You oughta go see a priest
JUST GO HOME!

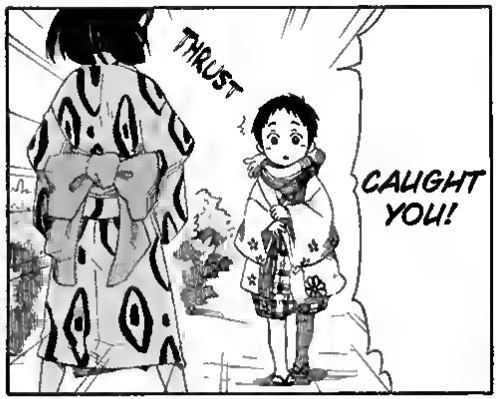

Yay!

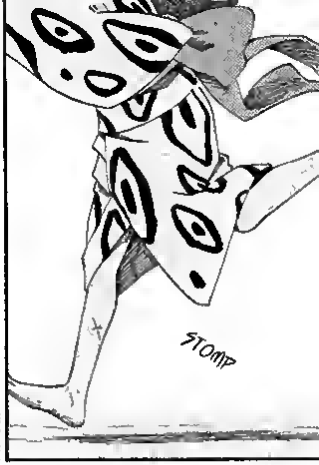

SO HIGH!

YOU SHOULD GO PLAY WITH YOUR FRIENDS.
WHAT'S WRONG? WHY DID YOU STOP, SHIROU?
ABOUT THAT...

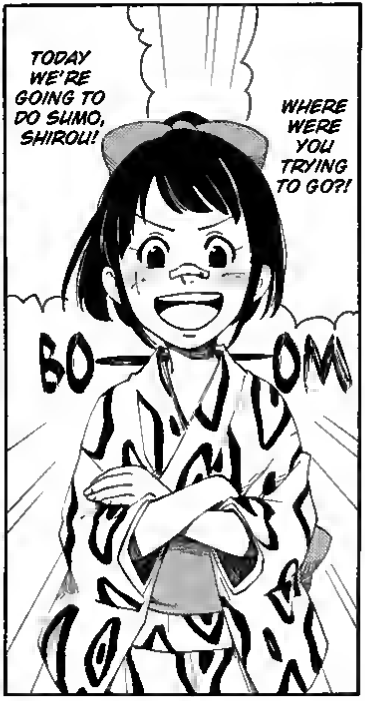
LET ME TRY TOO, BROTHER!
MAKE SURE YOU HOLD ON TIGHT.
Ha ha ha!
...

I'D SAY ABOUT THE ONLY TIME HE EVER PLAYED WITH SOMEONE ELSE IS WHEN I WAS AROUND.
WELL, THIS GUY'S KIDS HAVE A PRETTY BIG AGE GAP ON HIM.
WHEN HE LIVED WITH US, HE WAS ALWAYS PLAYING ALONE.
!
HE WON'T GO IN EVEN IF HE WANTS TO PLAY.
...
AND HE'S NEVER REALLY BEEN AROUND KIDS HIS OWN AGE BEFORE.
I GUESS THAT'S WHY IT TOOK HIM SO LONG TO START TALKING, TOO. HE'S ALWAYS BEEN SHY.


THRUST
CAUGHT YOU!


STOMP

SANA?!
She's so loud
I'LL TAKE YOU THERE NOW. LET'S GO!
...


TODAY WE'RE GOING TO DO SHIMO, SHIROU!
WHERE WERE YOU TRYING TO GO?!
BO—OM

COME BACK, SHI...
HEY, DON'T RUN AWAY!
AH!
SPIN
DASH
PUSH
DON'T BULLY HIM SO MUCH. POOR KID.
I TOLD YOU TO CALL ME "GENERAL"!
COME ON, KOUTA!
TWITCH
SIS.

I WASN'T BULLYING HIM!
SANA WANTS TO MAKE SHIROU STRONG!
SURE. BUT,
SHIROU DOESN'T UNDERSTAND THAT, DOES HE?
I MEAN,
SHIROU DOESN'T REALLY LIKE YOU MUCH.
GRIN
?!
HE DOESN'T?!
YOUR STYLES ARE TOTALLY A MISMATCH.
SHIROU'S QUIET AND CALM, BUT YOU'RE ALWAYS SO BOISTEROUS AND LOUD.
HEY, ISN'T HE BEING KIND OF ROUGH ON HER?
THEY'RE ALWAYS LIKE THIS.

IT'S BECAUSE SANA IS SHIROU'S SISTER!
EVEN IF HE DISLIKES ME, I'M NOT GONNA LEAVE MY PRECIOUS YOUNGER BROTHER ALONE!
ANYWAY,
OH WELL.
Heh
AH.
GRAAAAH!
COME BACK HERE, SHIROU!

SHIROU NEVER REALLY ADJUSTED TO US VERY WELL.
ALTHOUGH I THINK IT'S MOSTLY BECAUSE OF MY SISTER...
I'M SORRY IF SHIROU ENDS UP CRYING AGAIN.
FLINCH
UNCLE TORA,
WOULD IT BE OKAY...
IF WE TRY TO BE SHIROU'S BROTHER AND SISTER ONE MORE TIME?
BUT BECAUSE OF THE WAY SANA PLAYS, SHIROU ALWAYS JUST ENDED UP CRYING.
Nooo!
HIYAAAA!
ALL THE SAME...
MOM TOLD US WHEN SHIROU WAS VERY SMALL THAT WE HAD TO TAKE CARE OF HIM.

...
RUSTLE
WAAAAAAAH!
WHAT A GOOD CHILD! THE SAKE WON'T STOP FLOWING FROM MY EYES!
THE POLLEN IS SO STRONG HERE!
PBBBBBT
THEY'RE RUINING THE MOMENT...
HEY.

SINCE IT'S BEEN SO LONG, WHY DON'T WE PLAY TOGETHER?
I DIDN'T THINK HE'D COME BACK HERE AGAIN. DID YOU GUYS?
IF IT ISN'T THE CRYBABY THAT LIVES WITH THAT DEVIL WOMAN.
...
CAW
HEY, DON'T RUN OFF!

!
SHIROU...
DON'T YOU HAVE A GIFT FOR US?
SNATCH
OH!
LOOK, HE'S GOT SEA-SHELLS!
YOU AND YOUR DAD GO ALL OVER, RIGHT?
YOU GOTTA HAVE SOME-THING.
TUG
AH.
WOW, THEY'RE HUGE.
NO! GIVE 'EM BACK...

THUD
YOU'RE SO SMALL I ACCIDENTALLY BUMPED YOU
ROLL
OH MY! PARDON ME.
SHOVE
HOW STINGY.

CRY REAL LOUD!
SAY "PAPA!"
CHIRP
BWUSH
C'MON. GO AHEAD AND CRY.

HUH?
HE'S NOT A WEAKLING...
AH.
BUT YOUR PAPA'S A WEAKLING TOO, SO HE WON'T COME, HUH?
Ha ha ha!
SQUEEZE
SNATCH

MY PAPA'S NOT A WEAK-LING!
AND SHIROU DOESN'T CRY ANY MORE!
WHAT?
YOU SURE GOT RUDE.
IF YOU'RE REALLY NOT GONNA CRY WE'LL HAVE TO MAKE YOU.

!
HUG
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU JERKS DOING?!

ANYONE WHO WANTS TO MESS WITH SANA'S LITTLE BROTHER WILL HAVE TO GO THROUGH HER FIRST!
RUSTLE
SLAM
YOU SHOULDN'T SCREW AROUND WITH A LITTLE KID LIKE HIM!
SANAKO?!
OOOOW
IT'S THE MONKEY GIRL!
SHUT UP!
YOU DID GOOD NOT CRYING, SHIROU.

REAL GOOD!
YOU LEAVE THE REST UP TO YOUR BIG SIS, OKAY!
POP
HUH?
CLOSE YOUR EYES, SHIROU.
SLAP
RUSH
YOU THINK YOU CAN TAKE US ALL ALONE?!

TOSS TOSS
EXCELLENT TIMING. I WAS JUST LOOKING FOR SOME HUMAN TEST SUBJECTS, TOO.
OW! MY EYES!
COUGH
GAH! WHAT THE HELL'S THIS?!
YOU'LL BE OKAY, THOUGH. YOU'LL JUST CRY A WHOLE LOT FOR A WHILE.
COUGH COUGH
Oowww!
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF MY RED CHILI PEPPER SMOKE BOMBS?
SIGH
YOU SCUM.
GRIN
LIKE LITTLE BABIES.

HERE YOU GO.
ZOOM
BARK
BARK
WAAAH! MAMA!
WE COULD GO TOGETHER IF YOU LIKE.
SHAKE
SHAKE
YOU WERE GOING TO GIVE THEM TO YOUR MOM, RIGHT?
YOUR SHELLS
THEY'RE ...
GIFTS.
BUT—
COME ON! WHAT IF YOU MEET SOME OTHER JERKS LIKE THOSE GUYS?!
SIS.

FOR MY BROTHER
AND SISTER.

Hee hee!

THEY ARE?! THANK YOU, SHIROU!
THEY'LL BE MY SPECIAL TREASURES!
SNOOSH
SIS, YOU'RE HUGGING HIM TOO HARD.

SMILE

HEEY! TORA!
SNIFF
HE'S ALWAYS IN THE SAME PLACE IN THE FOREST.
HE RUNS OFF LIKE THIS I'M THE ONE WHO HAS TO GO COLLECT HIM.
EVERY TIME OUR SISTER SCOLDS HIM,
SOB
SNIFF
HE JUST CRIES HIMSELF TO SLEEP BENEATH THAT TREE.

IT'S BEEN A WHILE.
CAN'T YOU JUST FORGIVE HIM ALREADY?
HE'D GET SPOILED!
EVERY TIME HE JUST DOES THE SAME THING!
NEXT TIME HE DOES IT, HE CAN JUST STAY GONE!
FLINCH
SNIFF
I'LL HAVE TO BE THE ONE WHO COMFORTS HIM AFTER THIS, TOO
TRUTH IS, MY SISTER ONLY GETS MAD BECAUSE SHE LOVES HIM SO MUCH

EXTRA STORY FIFTEEN - END

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Chichikogusa

Chapter 18

BY TAGAWA MI

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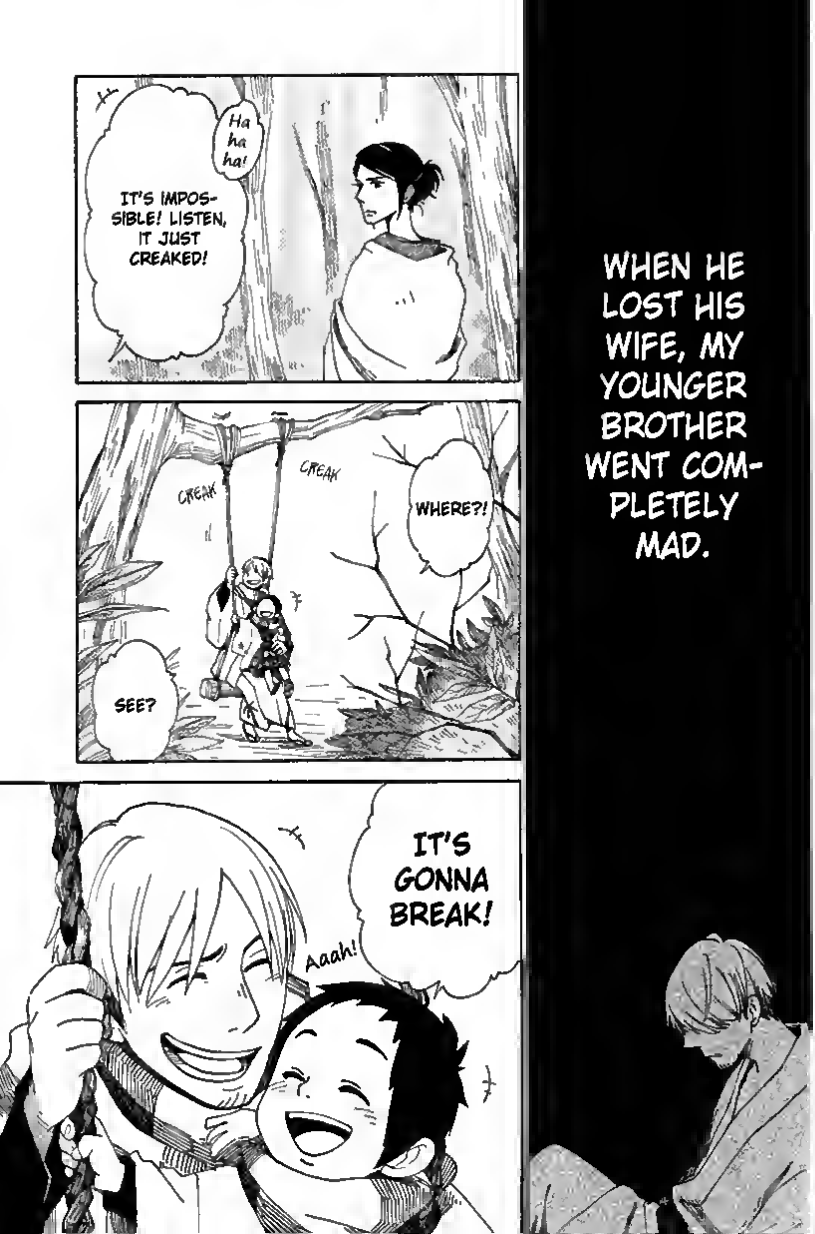
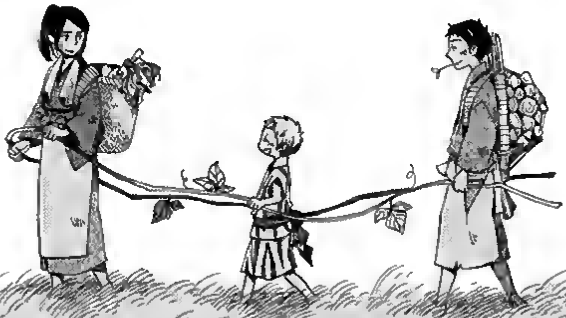

Ha ha ha!
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! LISTEN, IT JUST CREAKED!
CREAK
CREAK
WHERE?!
SEE?
IT'S GONNA BREAK!
Aaah!
WHEN HE LOST HIS WIFE, MY YOUNGER BROTHER WENT COMPLETELY MAD.

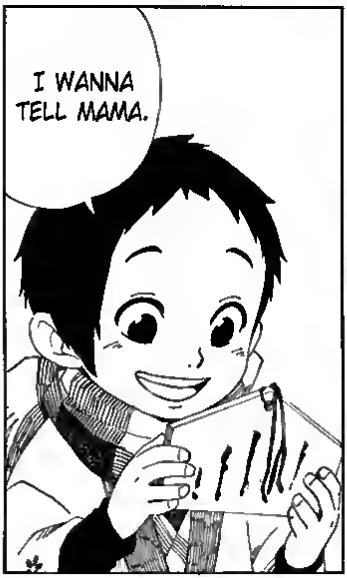
CHICHIKOGUSA
[FATHER AND CHILD GRASS]

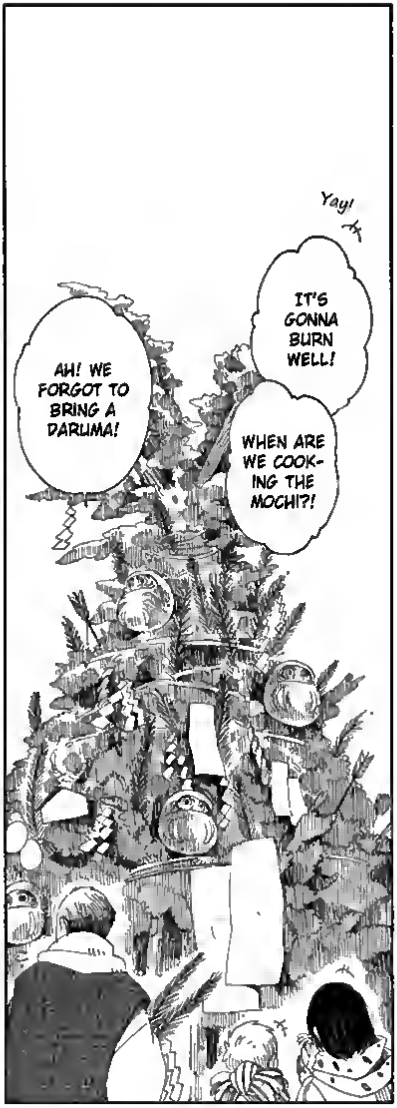
AUTHOR: TAGAWA MI



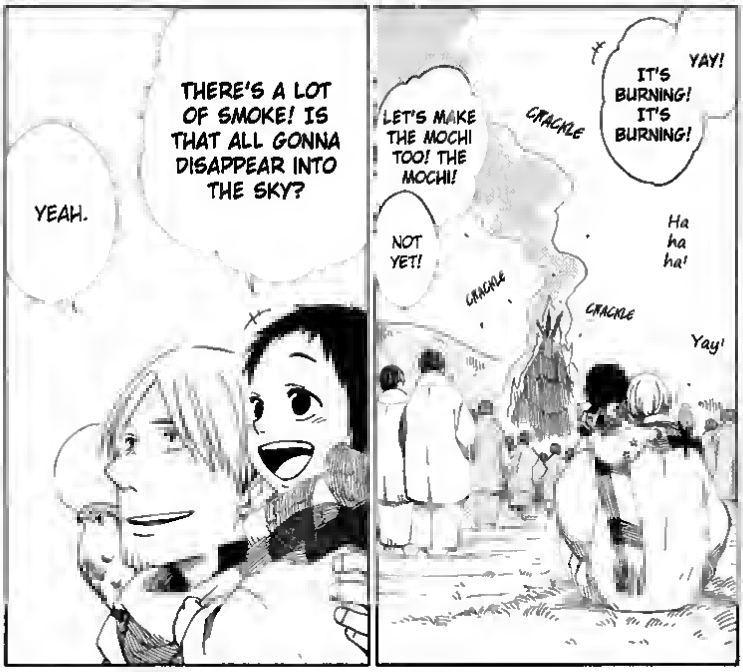
CHAPTER 18: FATHER AND CHILD'S NEW JOURNEY

IT'S OKAY.
PUTTING SOMETHING THIS IMPORTANT IN THERE?
IS IT REALLY OKAY?


I WANNA TELL MAMA.


Yay!
IT'S GONNA BURN WELL!
AH! WE FORGOT TO BRING A DARUMA!
WHEN ARE WE COOKING THE MOCHI?!

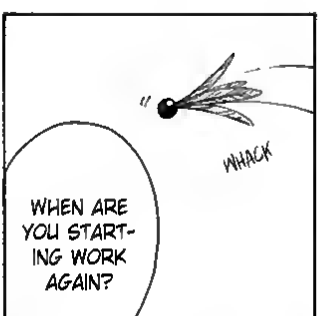
PLEASE LET TORA AND SHIROU GET ALONG WELL.
SHIORI
AND ONCE YOU GET YOUR WISH, YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BURN THE TABLET TO SAY THANKS TO THE GODS, RIGHT?
MAKE SURE MAMA KNOWS THAT SHIROU AND PAPA ARE GETTING ALONG WELL!
I WANNA...
HURRY UP! WE'RE STARTING THE FIRE
CRACKLE


THERE'S A LOT OF SMOKE! IS THAT ALL GONNA DISAPPEAR INTO THE SKY?
YEAH.
YAY! IT'S BURNING! IT'S BURNING!
CRACKLE
LET'S MAKE THE MOCHI TOO! THE MOCHI!
NOT YET!
Ha ha ha!
CRACKLE
CRACKLE
Yay!

...

BYE BYE...
ONCE SANA GETS HOME FROM SCHOOL, WE'LL GO FLY A KITE!
AT THE END OF THE NEW YEAR'S CELEBRATIONS,
MY HOME TOWN WENT BACK TO ITS USUAL WAYS.

THE, UH, LAST DAY..
AH.
WHAT?!
SLIP
OF WINTER?


WHACK
WHEN ARE YOU START-ING WORK AGAIN?

WELL, ANYWAY. BEFORE YOU START BACK, MAKE SURE YOU TALK THINGS OVER WITH SIS PROPERLY.

MAKES ME WONDER IF YOU CAN EVEN LOOK AFTER SHIROU PROPERLY. ARE YOU SURE YOU'LL BE OKAY?
MAN, YOU'RE BAD AT THIS. YOU HAVEN'T SCORED A SINGLE POINT.
IT'S BE-CAUSE YOU KEEP TALKING!
PAPA, BEND DOWN!

WHACK
...
DON'T IGNORE ME.

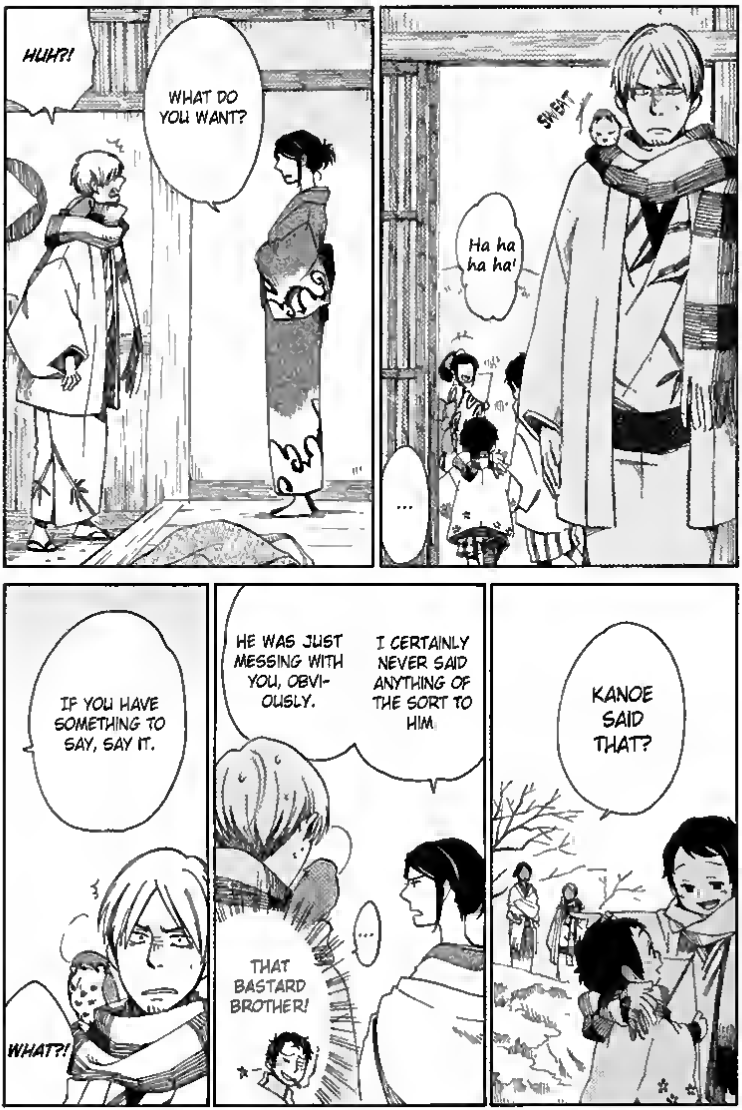
SOMEONE LIKE YOU TELLING ME THAT!
I DON'T NEED
WHACK
IF YOU WANT TO TAKE SHIROU WITH YOU WHEN YOU GO, YOU BETTER MAKE SURE YOU TELL HER ABOUT IT.
WHACK
ALTHOUGH I'M SURE AS LONG AS SHE'S WATCHING YOU CAREFULLY YOU'LL MAKE SURE TO ACT PROPERLY.
WHACK
WHACK
RIGHT. I'M SURE THE THOUGHT OF RUNNING OFF WITHOUT FACING HER NEVER CROSSED YOUR MIND.
WHACK
THAT'S NOT...
GRR...
WHACK
FWIP
IN ANY CASE, SHE SAID TO COME TALK TO HER AFTER THIS.
MY CONDOLENCES.

SHE DIDN'T TELL ME ANYTHING, BUT IT'S PRETTY OBVIOUS IT'S GOING TO BE ABOUT YOU AND SHIROU.
I DUNNO.
FFFF
WHAT?
WAS SHE MAD?!
OH, AND SHE SAID THE SOONER THE BETTER.
I'm all itchy.
SCRITCH SCRITCH
YEAH.
I'M GONNA BE HEADING OFF FIRST.
AWW...
KANOEMON, YOU'RE LEAVING?!
?!
ANYWAY NOW THAT I'VE PASSED THAT ALONG, IT'S TIME FOR ME TO BE ON MY WAY
NOBBLE
...

MAYBE IT'LL HELP YOU STAY HEALTHY UNTIL THE YEAR'S OVER.
Here.
I'LL GIVE YOU THIS SHUTTLE-COCK WE WERE JUST PLAYING WITH.
KAY.
I WANT TO SEE YOU EVEN MORE GROWN UP AND ENERGETIC.
NEXT TIME WE MET,
DON'T WORRY SO MUCH.
FLOMP!
AGAIN?! WHY YOU...
RUB
RUB
AHHH! I DON'T WANNA LEAVE YOU! WHY DON'T YOU COME WITH ME INSTEAD, SHIROU!
AAA-AH!

SHUT UP! AND YOU'D BE CAREFUL YOU DON'T GET MUSCLE SPASMS, YOU OLD MAN!
AH, BUT YOU'D BETTER WASH YOUR FACE. IT'S FILTHY!
YOU BET!
RUB
BYE BYE!
TELL HER I SAID GOODBYE!
YOU-KNOW-WHO'S BEEN LOOKING FOR A REASON TO FORGIVE YOU ANYWAY.
Later
SHIROU WANTS TO GO WITH PAPA!
Hee!
HUG

YEAH.
RUSTLE
MOOOM! SANA'S GONNA GO FLY KITES WITH SHIROU!
OK.
WHAM
CLATTER CLATTER
SANAKO! DON'T LEAVE YOUR BAG LYING AROUND IN THE ENTRY-WAY!
SLAM
WE'RE BACK!

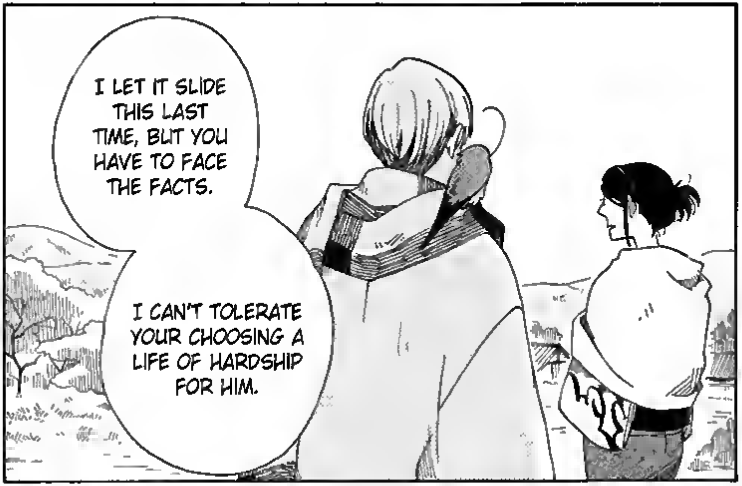

HUH?!
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
SWEAT
Ha ha ha ha!
...
KANOE SAID THAT?
I CERTAINLY NEVER SAID ANYTHING OF THE SORT TO HIM.
HE WAS JUST MESSING WITH YOU, OBVIOUSLY.
...
THAT BASTARD BROTHER!
IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY, SAY IT.
WHAT?!

THERE IS SOMETHING YOU WANT TO SAY, ISN'T THERE?
AH...
UM.
THAT IS...
CHOMP
OW!
IF THERE ISN'T, I'M LEAVING.
CAW!
AH!
WAIT!
LISTEN...

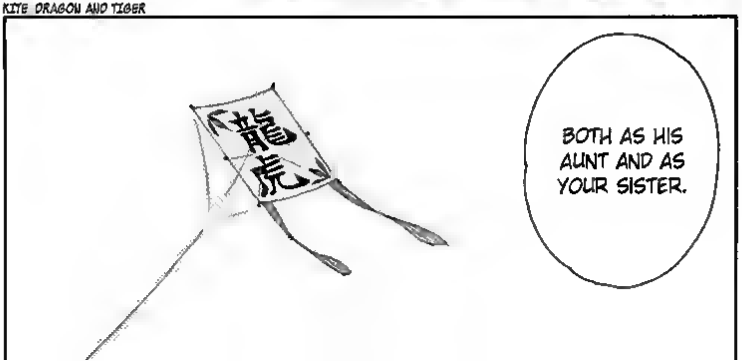
I KNOW.
WHAT?!
AH, NO.
THAT'S NOT...
WHAT...
I MEANT.
I MEAN. SHIROU...
I'M...
GOING TO HAVE TO RETURN TO WORK SOON. BEFORE THE LAST DAY OF WINTER.
AND PROBABLY I WON'T BE COMING BACK FOR A WHILE.

I'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM FOR YOU.
WHAT?!
AH, NO.
I'VE BEEN WATCHING THE TWO OF YOU WHILE YOU'RE HERE.

THE TWO OF YOU HAVE GROWN A LOT CLOSER TOGETHER.
SHIROU'S BECOME REALLY STRONG, TOO.
IT TOOK A WHILE,
BUT IT SEEMS YOU'RE FINALLY STARTING TO UNDERSTAND HOW TO BE A FATHER.
SO THAT'S NOT WHY I'M SAYING THIS.
BUT YOU HAVE TO REALIZE THAT SHIROU IS ONLY FOUR YEARS OLD.



KITE DRAGON AND TIGER



HE'S DOING OKAY NOW.
HE'LL ALWAYS CARE FOR YOU FROM THIS POINT ON.
EVEN IF HE'S APART FROM YOU HE'LL BE FINE.

HEH...

THANKS, SIS.

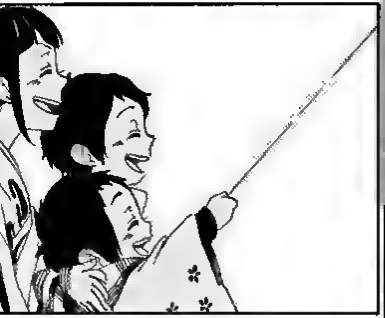
Haaa
BUT,
I ALWAYS JUST MADE YOU WORRY, AND I'M SORRY ABOUT THAT.
I KNOW I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A LOUSY BROTHER, EVER SINCE WE WERE LITTLE.
EVEN THAT STUPID BROTHER OF MINE.

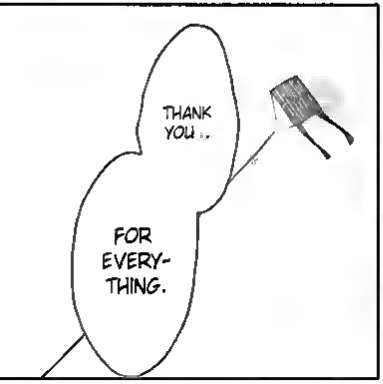
SHIROU'S GOING TO BE COMING WITH ME.

GRAB
AH!
TAP TAP TAP TAP
FUMU
I'VE ALREADY DECIDED.
IF THINGS GO BADLY THIS TIME, I WON'T FORGIVE YOU.
DO YOU SWEAR TO ME YOU'LL MAKE HIM HAPPY?!

TAKE GOOD CARE OF HIM, OKAY?
...
I...
I SWEAR IT.
SLAP
HMPH.
OW!
AND IF ANYTHING GOES WRONG, YOU'RE TO COME HOME STRAIGHT AWAY.
THIS IS LOUSY NEWS, BUT I'LL GIVE YOU UNTIL THE FIRST OF THE MONTH.

WELL, EVEN THOUGH I SAID ALL THAT, I GUESS YOU AREN'T LEAVING RIGHT NOW, HUH?
Ha ha ha!



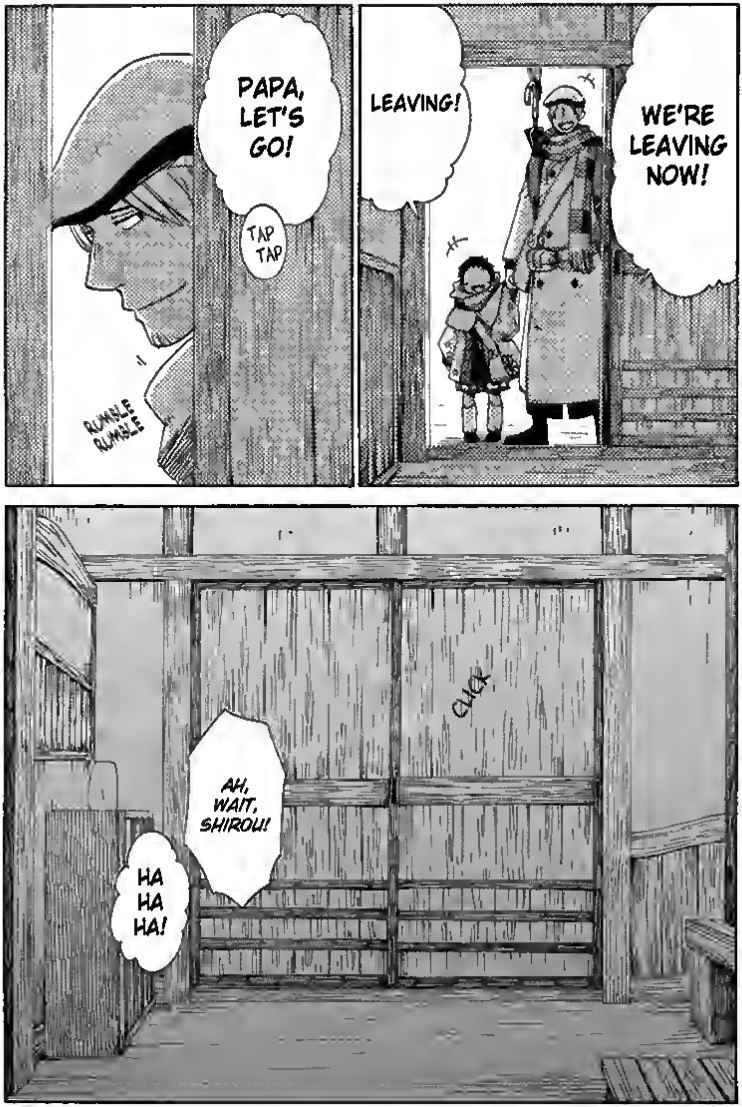

THANK YOU...
FOR EVERY-THING.

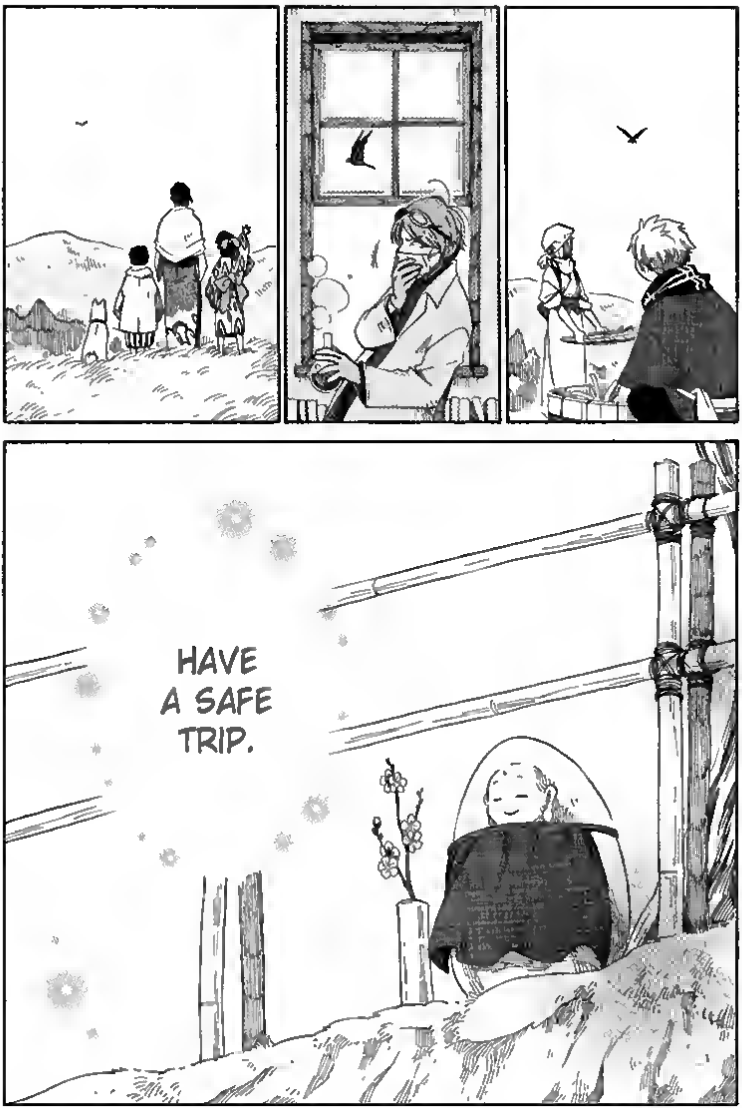
TORA.

PAPA!
HURRY!
JUST HANG ON!
WE STILL NEED TO LOCK UP!
CAW
YOU'RE STILL PACKING?!
SHIROU'S READY TO GO!
CAW
SHIROU'S DEVELOPMENT BOOK VOL. 3

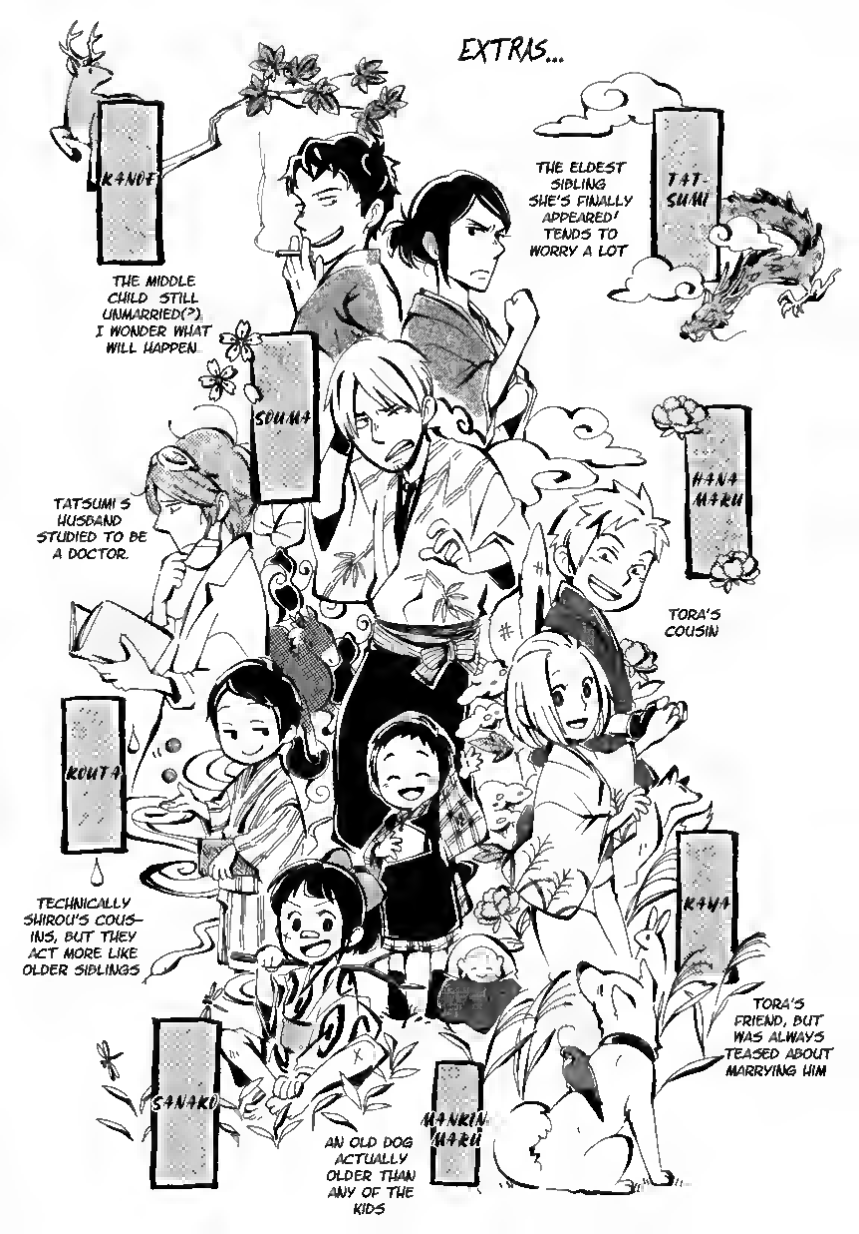
THESE JOURNALS SHIORI MADE FOR SHIROU.
I DIDN'T KNOW SIS WAS FILLING THEM OUT.
FLUTTER
I WON'T FORGET IT
SHIROU'S DEVELOPMENT BOOK YEAR 3
SQUEEZE
I GUESS I'LL BE DOING IT FROM NOW ON.
OKAY, OKAY!
Ha ha ha!
FLUMP
PAPA, YOU'RE SLOW!

FLAP
ALL RIGHT.
THEN,
LET'S GET GOING!
YEAH!


PAPA, LET'S GO!
TAP TAP
RUMBLE RUMBLE
LEAVING!
WE'RE LEAVING NOW!
CLICK
AH, WAIT, SHIROU!!
HA HA HA!


HAVE A SAFE TRIP.

CHICHIKOGUSA
[FATHER AND CHILD GRASS]


EXTRAS...
KANOE
THE MIDDLE CHILD STILL UNMARRIED(?). I WONDER WHAT WILL HAPPEN
TATSUMI
THE ELDEST SIBLING SHE'S FINALLY APPEARED! TENDS TO WORRY A LOT
SOUMA
TATSUMI'S HUSBAND STUDIED TO BE A DOCTOR.
HANA MARU
TORA'S COUSIN
KOUTA
TECHNICALLY SHIROU'S COUSINS, BUT THEY ACT MORE LIKE OLDER SIBLINGS
KAWA
TORA'S FRIEND, BUT WAS ALWAYS TEASED ABOUT MARRYING HIM
SANAKO
MANKIN MARU
AN OLD DOG ACTUALLY OLDER THAN ANY OF THE KIDS

SOAPBERRY

THE BERRIES OF THIS PLANT WERE USED AS SHUTTLECOCKS FOR BATTLEDORE, AN EARLY FORM OF BADMINTON. IN JAPANESE, THE SOAPBERRY'S NAME IS WRITTEN WITH THE CHARACTERS "CHILDREN WILL NOT BECOME ILL" AND IS PRONOUNCED "MUKUROJI."

BECAUSE OF THE CHARACTERS USED FOR WRITING THE PLANT'S NAME, BATTLEDORE WAS SUPPOSED TO WARD OFF ILL HEALTH IN (USUALLY FEMALE) CHILDREN

ANGELICA ROOT

ACCORDING TO AN OLD CHINESE STORY, THERE WAS ONCE A WOMAN WHO COULD NOT HAVE A CHILD SENT BACK TO HER PARENTS' HOME. SHE BREWED THIS HERB AND DRANK IT, REGAINING GOOD HEALTH THROUGHOUT HER BODY

BECAUSE THE MEDICINE ALLOWED HER TO RETURN TO HER HUSBAND WITH CERTAINTY, ITS CHINESE NAME WAS WRITTEN WITH THE CHARACTERS FOR "CERTAINTY" AND "RETURN."

THERE ARE VARIOUS OTHER ETYMOLOGIES FOR THE NAME, AS WELL

RADISH,

PARSLEY,

SHEPHERD'S PURSE,

DEADNETTLE,

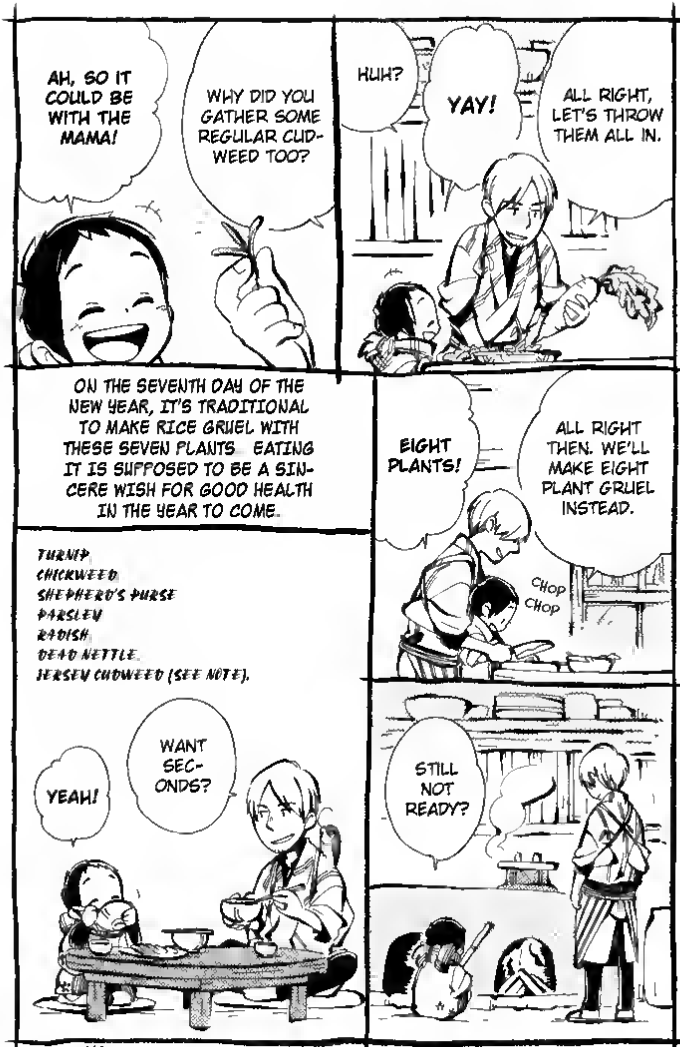
CHICKWEED,

AND JERSEY CUDWEED!

TURNIP,

SEVEN PLANT RICE GRUEL

LOOK, PAPA!


AH, SO IT COULD BE WITH THE MAMA!
WHY DID YOU GATHER SOME REGULAR CUD-WEED TOO?
HUH?
YAY!
ALL RIGHT, LET'S THROW THEM ALL IN.
ON THE SEVENTH DAY OF THE NEW YEAR, IT'S TRADITIONAL TO MAKE RICE GRUEL WITH THESE SEVEN PLANTS. EATING IT IS SUPPOSED TO BE A SINCERE WISH FOR GOOD HEALTH IN THE YEAR TO COME.
EIGHT PLANTS!
ALL RIGHT THEN. WE'LL MAKE EIGHT PLANT GRUEL INSTEAD.
CHOP CHOP
TURNIP
CHICKWEED
SHEPHERD'S PURSE
PARSLEY
RADISH
DEAD NETTLE
JERSEY CUDWEED (SEE NOTE).
YEAH!
WANT SEC-ONDS?
STILL NOT READY?
END

(THE COMMON JAPANESE NAME FOR JERSEY CUDWEED IS "MOTHER AND CHILD GRASS." THAT'S WHY SHIRON ALSO GATHERED REGULAR CUDWEED, KNOWN AS "FATHER AND CHILD GRASS"--AND THE TITLE OF THIS MANGA.)

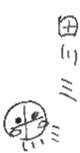
HELLO! THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR PASSING ANOTHER YEAR WITH CHICHIKOGUSA! ALTHOUGH THIS VOLUME ENDED UP BEING MOSTLY ABOUT STAYING HOME.

I FEEL LIKE I'VE DEVIATED A LITTLE FROM THE IDEA OF A FAMILY STORY ABOUT A FATHER AND SON, SINCE THERE WERE SO MANY RELATIVES IN THIS VOLUME, STARTING WITH TORAKICHI'S SISTER.

TORAKICHI AND SHIROU MAY BE THE ONLY TWO MEMBERS OF THEIR OWN FAMILY, BUT IT WOULD BE TOO PAINFUL IF THEY DIDN'T HAVE ANY EXTENDED FAMILY EITHER.

THE NEXT VOLUME WILL RETURN TO BEING ABOUT JUST THE TWO OF THEM, SO LOOK FORWARD TO IT!

ALL THAT SAID, I'LL SEE YOU THEN THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR CONTINUED INTEREST IN MY WORK!



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